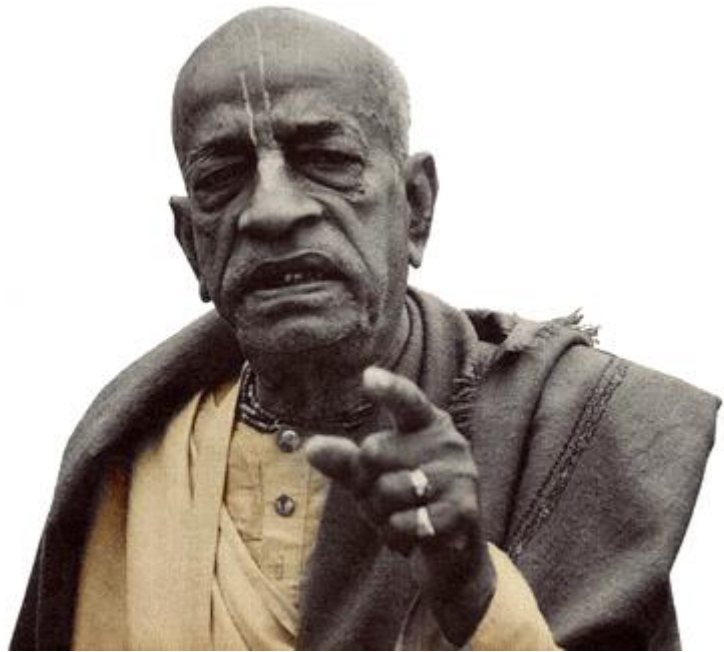


DEFEAT OF RITVIK-VADA (Abridged)

*A detailed analysis and rebuttal of the
Ritvik-vada manifesto, 'The Final Order'*



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by Rocana dasa
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DEDICATION

*This book is humbly dedicated to my eternal Spiritual Master
Jaya Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Asttotara Sata Sri Srimad
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada*

TECHNICAL NOTES

Because the full-length version of *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* (DOR) and its primary appendices is well over 200 pages, we offer this abridged version in an attempt to present a well rounded summary of our main arguments.

In the full-length version of DOR [[HTML](#) - [WORD](#) - [PDF](#)] we have progressively analyzed every key statement in the Ritvik-vada manifesto, *The Final Order* (TFO), rebutting the assertions made therein and pointing out how each faulty argument is built upon the preceding ones. Our counter-arguments are redundant, because we address each point in TFO, in context. In this abridged version of DOR, our primary arguments have been trimmed down to omit much of the line-by-line commentary, and many of our secondary arguments have been omitted altogether. Likewise, in our rebuttals here we have not provided specific references to all TFO statements, as we have in the full version. Thus in some cases, the reader must refer to the full-length version for substantiation of claims.

In the full-length version of DOR we have employed a number of navigation features that are somewhat different in the abridgement. For example, the error notations **[EF 1 p. 8]** in this

version are abbreviated. The page number gives the location of the error notation in the full-length version of DOR.

Only a few of the key point notations (❶ etc.) from our 'Comparative Review of the May 28th Conversation Transcripts' [APX-5] are carried forward to this abridgement. And while we have maintained the same numbering system in both versions of DOR, footnote references and appendix items are presented in a different order here, since content was shuffled as needed to allow smooth progression of arguments.

Indented, quoted material **not** taken from TFO, the source of which is not clearly evident (e.g., conversation transcripts), has been boxed to visually set it apart from quoted TFO text.

In one section of TFO the author addresses the question, 'What is a *ritvik*?' Following is our own answer to that question, as it relates to nomenclature used throughout *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*:

1. When referring to the 11 representatives named in the July 9th Letter, we refer to them as *ritviks* – the word that actually appears in the July 9th Letter.
2. When referring to the term found in sastra that describes *ritvik* priests who engage in various ceremonial functions, or derivations of that term, we use the Sanskrit term, small case in italics. Likewise, when using the term as TFO applies it, we use *ritvik*.
3. When referring to devotees who are adherents of Ritvik-vada – the school of philosophy that asserts a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for ISKCON – we use the term Ritviks. In this case the word is capitalized because it is used as a noun (grammatically, a 'regular countable noun'). These individuals are not necessarily *ritviks* (officiating priests), although some of them might be. Rather, they are members of a definable group (whether they consider themselves part of that group or not) – the group of those who accept that Srila Prabhupada put in place a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for ISKCON.

Whether or not one bases their position on the July 9th Letter, the May 28th Conversation, or any and all other so-called evidence is not the determining factor for inclusion in the Ritvik-vadi group. Likewise, whether or not one emphasizes a 'no living guru' theme, an 'officiating acarya/prominent link' theme, or otherwise, if they accept that Srila Prabhupada established a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for ISKCON, then in our nomenclature, they are Ritviks, or Ritvik-vadis.

Where the term 'Ritvik-vadis' is applied generally, or broadly in DOR, it is meant to refer equally to *The Final Order* and its author, because it is TFO which informs the Ritvik-vadis' essential position.

INTRODUCTION

*nama om visnu padaya krsna presthaya bhutale
srimate bhaktivedanta swamin iti namine
namaste sarasvate deve gauravani pracarine
nirvisesa sunyavadi pascatya desa tarine*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto
His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada,
who is very dear to Lord Krsna,
having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master,
servant of Sarasvati Gosvami. You are kindly preaching the message
of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries,
which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

I would like to begin by advising the reader that this paper, *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, is not 'light reading' and therefore requires a dedicated and focused approach. We believe, however, that the content is of great importance to the individual, and to the community of devotees concerned with the propagation of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's Sankirtan Movement.

The creators of this paper, myself and my good wife, Jahnava devi dasi, have spent many years in putting this presentation together. I would be remiss not to say that it was a labor of love. Of course, we are trying to follow in the footsteps of the Acaryas who have rendered service in this capacity, in the sense of challenging asiddhantic philosophies that have arisen due to the influence of the material world, and especially the Age of Kali.

The principle that is found at the root of all problems is that the bewildered conditioned soul is prone to follow asiddhantic untruths. Those who are familiar with ISKCON's history since the departure of the great Acarya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, will be aware of the many problems that have beset his mission. The essence of all these problems is a misunderstanding of the philosophy.

In *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, we are refuting a manifesto that was published by Krishnakant Desai in 1996, entitled *The Final Order*. This manifesto is held up as truth by those who have been convinced by the author's presentation of *guru-tattva*. These individuals, the Ritvik-vadis, have formed a group that now has several sub-branches. Underlying all problems in spreading Krsna consciousness, especially after the departure of a great Acarya, is the inevitable manifestation of religiosity. This Ritvik-vada is a form of religiosity, thus our occasional use of the designation, the 'Church of Ritvik'. With all due respect to the Ritvik-vadis, in the service of the Acaryas we are challenging their asiddhantic Ritvik position.

In the case of Ritvik-vada as presented in *The Final Order*, at least the asiddhantic philosophy has been written down in the form of a treatise that can be systematically addressed. This has allowed devotees to successfully challenge many aspects of Krishnakant's philosophical presentation over the years, and many writers have done an admirable job of that. Among them are the ISKCON leaders who have totally rejected Ritvik-vada, prohibiting it within Srila Prabhupada's society.

Throughout the years, we at the Sampradaya Sun have written many articles on this subject, addressing a variety of individuals and circumstances related to *guru-tattva*. This *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, which is a forensic deconstruction of *The Final Order*, is by far our most in-depth and focused effort in challenging Ritvik-vada. By Sri Krsna's causeless mercy I've had the assistance of my wife, who has the expertise and nature required to forensically examine and challenge the contents of *The Final Order*, and together we offer this rebuttal of the asiddhantic philosophy it promotes. We hope that *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* will serve as a useful resource for all those preaching against Ritvik-ism in the service of Srila Prabhupada.

We ask the reader to focus and with an open mind, to study the material presented here. We encourage the reader to study both the abridged and full-length versions of DOR, preferably starting with the abridged.

Many of my godbrothers and sisters, and in many cases my good friends have somehow fallen under the spell of this Ritvik philosophy. It's not pleasurable for me to disturb their minds, and I ask for their forgiveness in this regard. I hope that I can make an impression on them, opening their minds to the principle that there is an alternative to Ritvik-vada, and that alternative does not require embracing some other form of institutionalized asiddhanta. As we argue in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, by making a relatively small adjustment in thinking on *guru-tattva*, one can be in line with Guru, Sastra and Sadhu. That holds true for both the Ritviks and ISKCON leaders.

We welcome questions and challenges from our readers, and will appreciate hearing from each one of you. We do not claim that the conclusions presented in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* are absolute, although we believe them to be correct and truthful, and in presenting our arguments, have been as faithful to Srila Prabhupada's teachings and standards as possible. We will encourage discussion and debate of this paper in the Sampradaya Sun, and welcome all devotees interested in challenging or discussing our position.

We pray to Sri Krsna to bestow upon the reader the ability to comprehend what we are about to present here, for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada.

Hare Krsna

your servant,
Rocana dasa

August 1, 2012
Lord Balarama's Appearance Day

BACKGROUND

Since Srila Prabhupada's departure in late 1977, there have been two distinct phases of *guru-tattva* within ISKCON. First was the Zonal Acarya System, established in March 1978, which embodied the notion that Srila Prabhupada had named a group of successor *acaryas*. This system met with resounding disapproval by the community of devotees and was eventually replaced, around 1985. The new system continues today, with a few adjustments, and is known as ISKCON's 'No Objection' Diksa Guru program.

Today, the GBC refers to their initiators as 'ISKCON diksa gurus', not as '*acaryas*'. (*GII 1.5.6.1*) [1] They rightly say that sastra authorizes this system of disciplic succession – when the spiritual master departs, his qualified disciples may become diksa gurus. But as the 'ultimate managing authority' of the society, the GBC want to be gatekeepers, inserting themselves into the sastric process. Thus, when the system produces diksa gurus who fall down, the institution takes the blame. This system is now commonly and derogatorily known as the Diksa Guru 'Rubber-stamp' program, and it continues to be the focus of a great deal of turmoil in the society.

In his 1996 paper, *Reply to Jayadvaita Swami's Paper "Where the ritviks are Wrong"*, [21] Krishnakant coined the phrase "Multiple Acarya Succession System" (M.A.S.S.) to describe the current GBC initiations program, thus claiming that the GBC do still promote their diksa gurus as *acaryas*. That same year, Krishnakant released the first edition of his own *guru-tattva* manifesto, *The Final Order*.

As set down in TFO, the Ritvik-vadis distinguish their *guru-tattva* position from the GBC's by saying that Srila Prabhupada appointed not successor *acaryas*, but *ritviks* to carry on initiations after his departure. They claim that Srila Prabhupada established a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system wherein these *ritviks* officiate in making diksa disciples on behalf of Srila Prabhupada after his departure. But as we will prove in DOR, the entire Ritvik-vada system derives its authority from the notion that these *ritviks* **are**, in fact, *acaryas* – they are *officiating acaryas*, or *ritvik acaryas*. On one hand, TFO insists that the *ritviks* are just officiating representatives – not *acaryas*, as claimed by the GBC. But on the other hand, in order to argue that the *ritviks* are authorized to give post-samadhi diksa, TFO has to claim (albeit indirectly) that they **are** *acaryas*.

It is our position that by way of the July 9th Letter, Srila Prabhupada **did not authorize anyone to act as *acarya***: not *ritvik acarya*, not *officiating acarya*, not *diksa guru acarya*. He named 11 senior men to assist him as *ritvik representatives* of the *acarya*.

The role of *acarya* is not synonymous with, or non-different than so many other roles, like 'senior men, disciples, sanniyasis', or 'representatives'. Yet both the GBC and *The Final Order* essentially claim that the *ritvik representatives* named in the July 9th Letter are one and the same as the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* mentioned in the May 28th Conversation. We say that **an *acarya*** and a **representative of the *acarya*** are two different things entirely.

We argue that there is **no evidence** that the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada referred to in the May 28th Conversation – who he said he would recommend after "*this*" (some unspecified event) "*is settled up*" – are one and the same as the eleven *ritvik representatives* of **the acarya** named in the July 9th Letter. Thus, one cannot draw a longevity inference from the July 9th Letter instruction – whether using '*henceforward*' as a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa order, or using *acarya* as a bridge to connect the May 28th *officiating /ritvik acarya(s)* to the July 9th *ritvik* representatives.

THE FINAL ORDER

In the opening statements of *The Final Order*, author Krishnakant affirms that he believes the ISKCON leaders have been simply trying to please their Spiritual Master with their handling of *guru-tattva* since Srila Prabhupada's departure. However, he takes the leaders to task on both their *guru-tattva* programs: the early Zonal Acarya System and the current institutional 'No Objection' Diksa program.

TFO categorizes the GBC's two systems of initiation in terms of how they supposedly 'modify' the instructions in the July 9th Letter. Referred to as 'Modification a)' and 'Modification b)', the first relates a GBC presumption that the July 9th Letter appointed *ritvik* representatives for only a temporary period. The second, 'Modification b)', refers to their presumption that the *ritviks* were to automatically become diksa gurus upon Srila Prabhupada's departure.

While TFO says that it does not have an interest in conspiracy theories, it does raise the specter of conspiracy with respect to four differing versions of the May 28th Conversation transcript. Although a detailed analysis of this conversation is included in TFO, the author later repudiated the conversation as evidence due to questions about authenticity of extant copies of the audio tape. Thus TFO concludes that the May 28th Conversation cannot be taken to modify the July 9th Letter. Likewise, it concludes that instructions on disciplic succession contained within the standing body of sastra cannot be taken to modify the July 9th Letter.

In his examination of the July 9th Letter, the May 28th Conversation and other evidence related to his post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa thesis, TFO author Krishnakant puts forward quite a number of statements about how that evidence is to be considered and accepted or rejected in terms of 'modifying' the July 9th order. We have offered our own detailed comments on the inherent structural problems found in TFO that make it difficult to understand how its concluding statements on the evidence are meant to be comparatively weighted. **[APX-4]**

TFO accepts that meanings contained within its evidence could reasonably be altered by other 'modifying instructions', and makes this a fundamental rule of its process of inquiry. Krishnakant claims that all his arguments will be solely based on the philosophy and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada in his books, letters, lectures and conversations, however we will show that he actually bases his arguments on evidence that falls outside those bounds.

In championing the July 9th Letter as the 'final order', TFO asserts a rule that "*in logic, later statements supersede earlier ones in importance*", yet in the 'Appointment Tape' section of TFO, he effectively rejects the notion that later statements in that singular conversation should be taken to modify earlier statements. He also says:

"As a general point, later instructions from the guru will always supersede previous instructions: **The final order is the final order, and must be followed:**"

TFO applies this rule in support of the notion that the July 9th Letter is the final order on how initiations are to be conducted in ISKCON, and asserts that the letter supersedes all previous instructions of Srila Prabhupada, and apparently even those of sastra and the predecessor Acaryas of our Sampradaya. Of course, TFO doesn't offer an explanation as to how this 'last statement' rule works when it serves to contradict the many previous statements of sastra.

Nor does TFO live by its own 'last statement' rule as it applies to the July 9th Letter itself. TFO asserts that the July 9th Letter orders a post-samadhi system of *ritvik* diksa initiations designed to continue on after Srila Prabhupada's departure. Yet the very last statement of instruction contained in that letter says that **names of newly initiated disciples are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada** – not to his *ritvik* representatives or secretaries – but **to Srila Prabhupada** himself, which indicates that he must still be in his manifest lila in order for the process as described in the July 9th Letter to go on. TFO completely contradicts its own 'last statement' rule in regard to this all-important instruction.

When convenient, TFO emphasizes the necessity of taking the July 9th statements **absolutely**, at (what Krishnakant believes to be) face value, **without any interpretation** beyond the dictionary definition of a word. Yet in the case of the final instruction contained in the final order letter, TFO suggests numerous ways that it might be re-interpreted or ignored to accommodate the Ritvik-vada conclusion.

TFO asserts Srila Prabhupada's Will and Codicil as evidence in support of its post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory. It says that the July 9th Letter is the 'final order' and that the Codicil – written just nine days before Prabhupada's departure – is the final affirmation of that final order. But as we point out in great detail in DOR, that Codicil affirms a Will that pre-dates the July 9th Letter by more than a month. So according to TFO's 'last statement' rule, the Codicil actually serves to contradict its position.

In one section of TFO, the author addresses evidence that might be taken to support an alternative to the Ritvik system. Of course, even if there was no evidence to be found of an alternative system, still the July 9th Letter does not instruct a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. Even if the only other alternative was that for the next 10,000 years, sincere seekers would have to rely on Chaitya Guru alone to make arrangements for them to meet their eternal diksa guru, that would also be a perfect arrangement. TFO asserts the false notion that unless some alternative to its interpreted version of the July 9th order is found, then TFO's conclusion must be

accepted, otherwise Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON Movement could not go forward. But that is obviously not true. This Movement goes forward by Sri Krsna's arrangements.

TFO makes a number of surprisingly presumptuous statements in its thesis, beginning with one that is most significant. Under the 'Evidence' section, two italicized paragraphs are offered that TFO characterizes as being an '*account of historical fact*', accepted by everyone and disputed by none, and its arguments for Ritvik-vada progress from this narrative:

"The above account is not a political opinion, it is historical fact, accepted by everyone, including the GBC." [EF 4 p. 12]

But the so-called 'facts' are clearly wrong, what to speak of the notion that everyone else agrees with them. This 'historical account' from TFO is certainly not historical fact, and it does bear all the marks of political opinion. TFO gives this proclamation great emphasis: large, bold type, some of which is underlined. Consequently, the fact that the statement is untrue in every regard must be afforded equal weight. As our detailed analysis in DOR shows, this 'historical account' of TFO's contains one contradiction, one error of logic, one unsubstantiated claim, and six errors of fact. In other words, the assertions contained in these two very important paragraphs have been thoroughly impeached.

Modifications a) and b)

Krishnakant's stated intent in writing *The Final Order* was primarily to address two official GBC papers on *guru-tattva*: *Gurus And Initiation In ISKCON (GII)*, [1] and *On My Order Understood*. [2] TFO's purpose is not to challenge the position of others, like the authors of *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, who accept neither the GBC **nor** the Ritvik position.

A distinct bias can be found in TFO's presentation, skewed towards its argument against the GBC position. To a degree, TFO's arguments appear to be designed around the predictable answers likely to come from the GBC side in this debate. In other words, TFO was free to make certain claims, and lay down certain challenges, knowing that the GBC would find it difficult to rebut them, given their own history on *guru-tattva*. The author of DOR, however, is not constrained in the same way as the GBC. We are not defending the GBC's programs and policies, any more than we are defending a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. Consequently, we are free to challenge both sides, making our rebuttal of Ritvik-vada somewhat unique compared to previous challenges penned by devotees, including the GBC's many by-the-book apologists.

Over the course of our analysis and commentary on TFO, this dynamic comes up repeatedly with respect to TFO's characterization of the GBC's position, which it refers to in terms of Modification a) and Modification b). Because we are not concerned with defending the GBC's adoption of the Zonal Acarya System or their current institutional 'No Objection' Diksa program, we have little interest in issues related to Modification b) in the context of this paper. We are interested in TFO's Modification a) arguments, since they relate to the nature, duration and other specifics of the July 9th order.

We reject the notion that '*henceforward*' is the instruction for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for continuing Srila Prabhupada's branch of the disciplic succession. To that degree, our position is in agreement with the GBC's – that the July 9th order was temporary.

We also argue that TFO's characterization of the GBC's position with respect to Modification a) is a misrepresentation. [EL 3 p. 22] The GBC position relies primarily upon the word '*acarya*' mentioned in the May 28th Conversation, as they relate that word to the *ritvik representative of the acarya* mentioned in the July 9th Letter. TFO implies that the GBC's position is keyed off the word '*henceforward*', but that term is actually less significant than the word '*acarya*' in the GBC's position. Thus, the logical premise underlying TFO's Modification a) argument is flawed from the start.

Our primary focus in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* is to challenge the fundamental evidence underlying TFO's assertion of a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. We are not addressing philosophical or managerial issues that might arise subsequent to an acceptance (even a hypothetical acceptance) of that evidence.

Our task is to make it very obvious that for *The Final Order* thesis to prove viable, the July 9th Letter must stand on its own as evidence in the context of the Modification a) argument – and that, **it completely fails to do.**

EARLY 1977 INITIATIONS

While TFO repeatedly states that the *ritvik* system was set-up on July 9th, in the section on Srila Prabhupada's Will, under 'Subsequent Instructions', it says the system was already in place at the time the Will was executed – June 6th/7th, 1977.

Elsewhere, TFO states:

"Besides, there was no need to give detailed explanations of the *ritvik* system in his books since he had practically demonstrated prototypes of it for many years, with the final touches of how it was to continue fully elucidated in the July 9th order."

TFO asserts that the system of initiation Srila Prabhupada had used over the years, adjusting it as needed from time to time, was designed to eventually serve as a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. The term '*prototypes*' implies a design, and a design suggests intention. But we have no evidence of any intention on Srila Prabhupada's part to progressively design a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system.

TFO also argues that:

"By 1975, Srila Prabhupada had indeed 'empowered', or authorised, devotees such as Kirtanananda to chant on beads and conduct initiations on his behalf."
[AE 9 & 10 p. 87]

By equating the two words, 'empowered' and 'authorised', TFO implies that the trained, empowered disciples later became the authorised *ritviks*. Of course, Srila Prabhupada never said such a thing. He never "authorised" anyone to initiate on his behalf after his departure. He simply appointed *ritvik* representatives to assist him while he was present.

By whatever name one calls it (we consider it a *siksa* system), sometime in early 1977, the system Srila Prabhupada had put in place for initiations was arbitrarily stopped by his senior men. On July 7th, 1977, Tamal Krishna reported this fact to Srila Prabhupada, saying they had stopped processing candidates for initiation due to concerns about Prabhupada's health. This situation is discussed in detail under the ['July 7th Conversation'](#) section.

Throughout TFO, there are numerous statements made about the system ordered by the July 9th Letter, characterizing it in terms of when the *ritvik* system began, for how long it operated and when it was terminated.

TFO asserts that the *ritvik* system set down by the July 9th Letter (which it says was intended to continue on as a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system) was abandoned by the GBC upon Srila Prabhupada's departure. TFO claims the *ritvik* system had actually been going on well before the July 9th Letter and with a few notable changes, that same *ritvik* system continued from July 9th until Srila Prabhupada's departure. In other words, it suggests the GBC *abandoned* a long-standing system. [EF 30 & 31 p. 98].

We challenge TFO's claim that the *ritvik* system was 'abandoned' by the GBC upon Srila Prabhupada's departure. First, there is an error of logic [EL 12 p. 60] in the assertion that a process can be *abandoned*, when it was not actually functioning in the first place. Open for discussion is the degree to which the early 1977 initiations system was effectively halted by the senior men due to concerns about Srila Prabhupada's health. Whether the system came to a full sudden stop or steadily declined, along what timeline trajectory this took place, and the degree to which the system effectively ceased functioning before July 9th is not entirely known. But one cannot deny that the system had indeed been halted, thus causing the bottleneck problem Srila Prabhupada had to solve on July 7th.

Also open for discussion is the degree to which the new improved initiations system was effectively abandoned, or did not run properly, from July 9th to November 14th, 1977. Unless the GBC and/or the individual Zonal Acaryas publish the data, naming their 1977 and 1978 initiates and giving the dates of initiation, we will likely never know with certainty the degree to which that July to November initiations system failed.

As described in the Appendix document, *Performance of the 11 Rittik Representatives, July to November 1977* [APX-2], the record shows that only 234 initiations were conducted between the time of the July 9th Letter and Srila Prabhupada's entering into maha-samadhi. Common

historical knowledge tells us that thousands were initiated by the Zonal Acaryas in early 1978. This is a good indication of the degree to which the system for initiations had not been functioning from early 1977, and for all intents and purposes remained non-functional even after the July 9th instruction was released.

Thus, while TFO suggests that the GBC cannot 'make a case for abandoning the July 9th order', it is a moot point, given that the system really was not functioning in the first place. One could argue that a system functioning even a little bit could be 'abandoned', but that is a matter of rhetoric. For the many candidates who were counting on having the system function – candidates whose spiritual lives stood to be enormously affected – a system working *only a little bit* would be little consolation.

Characterizing the GBC's *guru-tattva* position, TFO claims they "*are in blatant violation of Srila Prabhupada's final order.*" [AE 14 p. 95] We disagree, because this argument relies on the assertion that the July 9th Letter contains instructions for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, which it does not. What the ISKCON/GBC violates is not the letter, but sastra itself, which TFO and the Ritvik-vadis violate in similar fashion – both camps attempt to impose contrived institutional controls on a system of spiritual philosophy.

JULY 7th CONVERSATION

In a room conversation on July 7th, 1977, Tamal Krishna informed Srila Prabhupada that a problematic bottleneck had developed, because the senior men had stopped processing candidates for initiation through the system due to worries about Prabhupada's health. Srila Prabhupada immediately provided a solution to the problem, instructing how the process should be streamlined. He made it clear that he would take part in the process, along with various men he named that day to assist him.

Two days later, the July 9th Letter was released. By comparing the July 7th Conversation transcript to the July 9th Letter text, we can see that much of the conversation was memorialized in the letter.

It's interesting to note that the July 7th Conversation is not substantively addressed in TFO until well along into the paper. With the exception of one brief mention regarding the adding of names to Srila Prabhupada's book of initiated disciples, and a single sentence that's quoted twice (*wherever you consider it is right*), this important conversation is not mentioned at all in TFO throughout its lengthy sections on 'The Evidence', 'The Order Itself', 'Supporting Instructions', 'Subsequent Instructions', etc. A great many arguments are presented in TFO before it acknowledges the conversation that took place just two days before the July 9th Letter was written – a conversation that is memorialized by the all-important July 9th Letter.

Of course, it's understandable that TFO's author would choose to avoid getting into a discussion of the July 7th Conversation, which makes it very clear that Tamal Krishna was presenting a problem (the bottleneck), and Srila Prabhupada was solving the problem by making a few adjustments to the initiation system. There was absolutely no indication in either the July 7th Conversation or subsequently in the July 9th Letter that a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system was being instructed. Instead, the July 7th Conversation makes it clear that Srila Prabhupada would **continue to be involved** in the system ("*India, I am here*"). TFO asserts that by way of the July 7th Conversation, Srila Prabhupada actually removed himself entirely from the system, and this was an indication that he was preparing a plan for continuation after his departure. So obviously, it does not serve TFO to put undue focus on the July 7th Conversation.

Of course, dealing with the July 7th Conversation eventually becomes unavoidable, because the July 9th Letter refers to a previous discussion – and given the available evidence, that discussion was either the May 28th Conversation or the July 7th Conversation. This matter is discussed in more detail below, in the 'July 9th Letter' section.

Empowering in *absentia* actions

One of the arguments TFO puts forward is that via the July 9th Letter, Srila Prabhupada delegated to his *ritviks* the responsibility for making an agreement, *in absentia* on Prabhupada's behalf, to accept an individual diksa disciple as Prabhupada's own disciple. In the counter-argument to Objection #8, TFO states:

"In one of the main sections on *diksa* in Srila Prabhupada's books, it is stated that the only requirement for receiving it is the agreement of the guru. This agreement was totally delegated to the *ritviks*:"

Absent citations, this claim must be thrown out as unsubstantiated. [UC 14 p. 93] Aside from that, the argument is also flawed. Nowhere did Srila Prabhupada say that his *ritvik* representatives were empowered or authorized to make agreements on his behalf, after his departure, with diksa candidates wishing to become his disciples. What TFO puts forward as evidence of this supposed delegation of powers is this statement from the July 7th Conversation:

"So without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right. That will depend on discretion."

When this statement is read in context, however, it becomes clear that TFO's assertion is built on speculation and flawed logic. [EL 23 p. 93] The ten lines preceding the above quote are specifically about the listing of names of representatives, their regional locations, and distributing the list of their names. In this context, Srila Prabhupada's statement – "*So without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right... That will depend on discretion*" – could very well have been referring to adding more names to the list in a particular zone. First there were seven names given, then another name, then another name. Then Srila Prabhupada says, 'without waiting... **wherever** you consider it is right. The word "wherever" refers to place. It is not

synonymous with "whenever", which refers to time. So *wherever* you consider it is right... Where? In the regions we are discussing... South America, and before that, India, and America. Srila Prabhupada said: "Five, six men, you divide who is **nearest**."

In the midst of all these statements referring to choosing representatives for various **places**, it is inarguable that Srila Prabhupada's statement, "*wherever* you consider it is right" could be referring to adding more representative names to the list in needed areas. That is at least as possible, if not far more likely, than TFO's interpretation that "*the only requirement for receiving it [diksa] is the agreement of the guru*", and that "*without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right*" means 'give diksa by ritvik without waiting for me'.

"India, I am here"

In the context of the Ritvik-vada debate, one of the most significant statements in the July 7th Conversation is Srila Prabhupada's remark, "*India, I am here*". One might question whether Prabhupada was referring to himself, in India, writing names into his book, or whether he was referring to conducting initiations. Obviously the reference means the latter – and TFO agrees.

Understood in context, the statement is quite clear. Harikesa, Tamal Krishna and Jayapataka, the three persons mentioned in this passage, are all among the named 11 initiating representatives. Srila Prabhupada's self-referential statement, "*India, I am here*", places him as a member of this group. The reference is clearly to initiating, not to the secretarial duty of writing names in a book.

Jayapataka Swami, whose name only now came up, in the context of this specific exchange, was immediately affirmed when Tamal Krishna listed the names of all seven of the initiating representatives chosen thus far. Obviously, the intent in this conversation, as both Tamal Krishna and Srila Prabhupada expressed it, was not that Jayapataka was mentioned in reference to writing names in the book – Srila Prabhupada mentioned him as an initiating representative, **and added his own name in that very same statement**.

While the author of TFO makes every effort to convince his readers that Srila Prabhupada had completely withdrawn himself from the process of initiations as of the July 9th Letter, that is clearly not the case, as evidenced by both the July 7th Conversation and the July 9th Letter. Srila Prabhupada has included himself in the initiations system, in India. Therefore, a Temple President may choose to send a letter of recommendation for a diksa candidate in India to Srila Prabhupada himself, who – as His Divine Grace states – is also in India.

If that were to happen, what would be the predictable outcome? There is nothing in the July 9th Letter to indicate that such a letter of recommendation would have been rejected and sent back to the Temple President. Rather, the expectation would be that the letter would be accepted and processed by Srila Prabhupada and whoever was assisting him in India at the time (his secretary). Nor is there any reason to believe that a Temple President who sends a letter of recommendation to Srila Prabhupada in India, for a candidate in India, would have been **disobeying** the July 7th Conversation or the July 9th Letter by taking this step.

So although TFO would have us believe that Srila Prabhupada completely removed himself from the initiations process, giving all authorization over to his *ritvik* representatives via the July 9th Letter, thus empowering them to carry on after his departure conducting post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa initiations – **that is obviously not the case.**

Srila Prabhupada's Health

Another argument put forward in favor of the Ritvik-vada conclusion is that Srila Prabhupada deputed his 11 *ritvik* representatives to perform initiations, for reasons of health. But we can see that the health issue was not an absolute, or imperative driver.

And of course, had the senior men realized who Srila Prabhupada really is through understanding his exalted transcendental status, they would never have just assumed that his illness would prohibit him from initiating. Even so, in the July 7th Conversation, Srila Prabhupada made it clear that he would continue to be involved by his statement: "*India, I am here*". Likewise, he made it clear in the July 9th Letter that he would continue to be involved in the process: names of new initiates are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada for inclusion in his book of initiated disciples.

Consider the scenario described above, and that of a Temple President who has heard Srila Prabhupada's July 7th statement, "*India, I am here*". He then receives a copy of the July 9th Letter, instructing that *henceforward*, he may now send letters of recommendation to a *ritvik* representative close to him. There is no instruction barring him, nor even discouraging him from sending a letter of recommendation to Srila Prabhupada in India, for a candidate in India. And although it was common knowledge that Srila Prabhupada was dealing with health problems at the time, some devotees were also aware that at this very same point in time, Srila Prabhupada was working even more vigorously than usual on his translating work, despite ill health.

In the July 11th, 1977 Letter to Kirtanananda, Tamal Krishna wrote:

"His Divine Grace has been maintaining His health on an even course and most amazingly has doubled His translation work keeping pace with the doubling of book distribution."

Knowing this, a Temple President might very well have chosen to send a letter of recommendation to Srila Prabhupada in India following the July 7th Conversation and July 9th Letter. There was no instruction to dissuade him from doing so, and certainly no hard and fast rule that would prevent it. Even the author of TFO admits that the health issue did not represent an absolute obstacle in the minds of the devotees:

"Devotees may or may not have been aware of the extent of Srila Prabhupada's illness; but how could they possibly be expected to deduce from a letter that says nothing about his health, that this was the only reason it was issued?"

THE JULY 9th LETTER

Following is the text of the July 9th, 1977 Letter [APX-1](#) (p. 86), which is Srila Prabhupada's last signed directive on the matter of initiations in ISKCON. This letter serves as the foundation of Ritvik-vada philosophy.

July 9th, 1977

To All G.B.C., and Temple Presidents

Dear Maharajas and Prabhus,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your feet. Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana, Srila Prabhupad indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as "rittik" -- representative of the acarya, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation. His Divine Grace has so far given a list of eleven disciples who will act in that capacity:

His Holiness Kirtanananda Swami
His Holiness Satsvarupa das Gosvami
His Holiness Jayapataka Swami
His Holiness Tamal Krsna Gosvami
His Holiness Hrdayananda Gosvami
His Holiness Bhavananda Gosvami
His Holiness Hamsadutta Swami
His Holiness Ramesvara Swami
His Holiness Harikesa Swami
His Grace Bhagavan das Adhikari
His Grace Jayatirtha das Adhikari

In the past Temple Presidents have written to Srila Prabhupad recommending a particular devotee's initiation. Now that Srila Prabhupad has named these representatives, Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple. After considering the recommendation, these representatives may accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupad by giving a spiritual name, or in the case of second initiation, by chanting on the Gayatri thread, just as Srila Prabhupad has done. The newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad, the above eleven senior devotees acting as His representative. After the Temple President receives a letter from these representatives giving the spiritual name or the thread, he can perform the fire yajna in the temple as was being done before. The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her to Srila Prabhupad, to be included in

[His] Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.

Hoping this finds you all well.

Your servant,
[signed]
Tamal Krsna Gosvami
Secretary to Srila Prabhupad

Approved: [signed] A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

[Note: In many digital copies of the letter, the word 'His' in the last sentence is blank. The word appears to have been present in the original but blanked out (inadvertently, we presume) in the photocopy from which many digital copies have proliferated. The presence of the word in the original is indicated in copies, however, by typographical artifacts that match the left edge of a capital 'H'. But either way, the meaning of the sentence is clear.]

Two days after the July 7th Conversation took place, the July 9th Letter was released. The letter lists the names of 11 disciples who are to act as *rittik* representatives of the acarya, assisting Srila Prabhupada with initiations. The letter states:

"Recently when all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace in Vrndavana, Srila Prabhupada indicated that soon He would appoint some of His senior disciples to act as "rittik" - representative of the acarya, for the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation."

The July 9th Letter does not specifically say *which* Vrndavana Conversation is being referred to, therefore the question remains open. The July 7th Conversation is a likely referent because it is closest on the timeline, and specific names of men were being mentioned to assist with initiations. Although the July 7th Conversation in Vrindavan was only two days prior to the July 9th Letter, it is also possible that the meeting in Vrndavana mentioned in the letter was the May 28th Conversation, held 42 days before July 9th. It was on May 28th that Srila Prabhupada indicated he would be appointing some of his men to act as "*ritvik*".

While the published conversation transcript indicates who was speaking on July 7th, it does not indicate who else was present in the room. Therefore, we cannot disqualify it as the referent mentioned in the July 9th Letter based on the transcript alone. The same holds true for the May 28th Conversation – the transcript only indicates who was speaking, not who else was present in the room.

While the word *ritvik* was mentioned only on May 28th, and not on July 7th, the word used in the July 9th Letter is not *ritvik*, but rather "*rittik*", in quotations. So again, you cannot say absolutely that it was the May 28th Conversation being referred to in the July 9th Letter based upon a reference to this word, alone.

While it is not entirely clear whether TFO concludes that the July 9th Letter is referring to the May 28th Conversation or the July 7th Conversation, TFO does make the point ('Appointment Tape' section) that neither the July 9th Letter nor any subsequent document signed by Srila Prabhupada refers back to the May 28th Conversation.

As mentioned above, on July 7th Tamal Krishna informed Srila Prabhupada that a bottleneck had developed because candidates for initiation were no longer being processed through Prabhupada's existing system. Srila Prabhupada therefore gave a solution to the problem, making various adjustments to the system. These adjustments were memorialized in the July 9th Letter, which states:

"Now that Srila Prabhupada has named these representatives, Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple."

Clearly, it was only during the July 7th Conversation that Srila Prabhupada named specific men who would assist him – he did not list specific names during the May 28th Conversation. Therefore, one cannot deny that the July 9th Letter refers, at least in part, to the July 7th Conversation, not just the May 28th Conversation. And in the 'Appointment Tape' section, TFO acknowledges this:

"It is clear though that the specific order naming specific people to perform specific functions was first made on July 7th (*please see Appendices*), and then confirmed in the signed letter of July 9th."

TFO emphasizes that it was the May 28th Conversation that informs the July 9th Letter. Although the author admits that the July 7th Conversation is also reflected in the July 9th letter, he ignores the statement, "*India, I am here*", which undermines the longevity element he insists the letter sets forth. At the same time, he acknowledges that the listing of names from July 7th is an integral element of the letter.

Following the July 7th Conversation in which Srila Prabhupada solved the bottleneck issue, one of the adjustments described in the July 9th Letter uses the term '*henceforward*'. It is stated as an optional step, not as an absolute-only step. The term '*henceforward*' is specifically used in reference to an action the Temple Presidents **may** take – not an action that the Temple Presidents **should**, or **shall**, or **must** take – but an action that they **may** take. [EF 5 p. 13] [5]

Temple Presidents **may** accept a candidate, or they **may** reject them and not recommend them. They have an option, a choice. The Temple Presidents **may** send recommendations to whichever of the eleven representatives is closest to their temple – they may do so; it is an option. And once received, the 11 *rittik* representatives **may** – or may not – choose to accept the candidate. They also have some choice in the matter.

The meaning of the word **may** is made clear by repeated use in the July 9th Letter. Temple Presidents **may** send recommendations, and likewise "*after considering the recommendation, these representatives **may** accept the devotee*".

In response to the bottleneck problem, Temple Presidents were given an optional means of processing candidates for initiation: they **may** now send recommendations to a *rittik* representative closest to them. The letter clarifies that Srila Prabhupada would still be involved in this system (send him names for his book), and two days prior, on July 7th he clarified that he would still be involved in the system ("*India, I am here*").

There was no mention of post-samadhi initiations in the July 7th Conversation

There was no mention of post-samadhi initiations in the July 9th Letter

The July 9th Letter does not mention an 'officiating *acarya* system', as TFO claims

The July 9th Letter does not say that an 'officiating *acarya*' system is to be instituted *immediately*, as TFO claims

The July 9th Letter says that "*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation... to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple*" — not MUST, SHALL or SHOULD, but **may**. Likewise, the *rittik* representatives, after considering the recommendation, **may** accept the devotee". Or they may not — it is an option, not an absolute.

The Temple Presidents referred to in the July 9th Letter, who **may henceforward** send recommendations, are **NOT** one and the same personalities as the 11 *rittik*s themselves. It is not that any Temple President, anywhere on the planet, can simply assume the duties of one of the 11 *rittik*s. Nor is a *rittik* representative necessarily a Temple President. Application of the term *henceforward* in the July 9th Letter cannot be arbitrarily assigned to just anyone. The July 9th Letter does not say that '*henceforward*', the 11 *rittik* representatives shall do anything at all. In fact, if no letters of recommendation were sent to them, they would have no further instructions or role whatsoever under the terms of the July 9th Letter.

TFO's misrepresentations of the July 9th Letter

TFO takes liberties in representing what the July 9th Letter states, in several other ways. For example, it claims that the "*new disciples would be given spiritual names and have their beads and gayatri mantras from the 11 named representatives*", but there is no mention of chanting on beads in the July 9th Letter.

TFO states that: "*Srila Prabhupada thus handed over to the representatives total power of attorney over who could receive initiation, he made it clear that from that time onwards he was no longer to be consulted.*" **[EF 8 & 9 p. 17]** But the July 9th Letter is **not a 'power of attorney'**, and makes **no mention** of such a phrase, that he should *no longer be consulted*.

Power of attorney is a legal instrument [7] by which one person assigns another person the legal right to act on his behalf. One might argue that TFO's use of the term 'power of attorney' means the same as in the context of Srila Prabhupada's letter to Tusta Krsna, December 2, 1975 [8]. But clearly, in that instance Srila Prabhupada used the term in a very general, non-legal way. This is an important distinction to make, given that TFO characterizes the July 9th Letter in various ways, such as it being an absolute 'order', a 'policy document', a 'management directive' and a 'power of attorney'.

TFO states:

"The only innovation this letter contained then was the formalisation of the role of the representatives; [EF 20 p. 64] hardly something which could be confused with a direct order for them to become fully-fledged *diksa gurus*."

The primary innovation introduced in the July 9th Letter was the instruction that in future, *henceforward*, Temple Presidents may send letters of recommendation to the 11 newly named, regionally-chosen *rittik* representatives. This was a new step, to be taken by specific individuals **other than** the named representatives – i.e., the Temple Presidents.

The July 9th Letter added two additional steps to the process: 1) giving the 11 *rittik*s the duty to **receive** any letters of recommendation the Temple Presidents might send them, and 2) giving the *rittik*s the duty to give spiritual names. The Letter also formalized the fact that Srila Prabhupada **was a direct participant** in the new process, and that names of initiates were to be **sent to him**, for inclusion in his book.

TFO states:

"The most notable difference after July 9th, 1977 was that the acceptance of new disciples would now be done by representatives without recourse to Srila Prabhupada. The letter, which was sent out to new initiates, would no longer be signed by Srila Prabhupada, and the selection of all the initiates' names would be done by the *ritvik*s. Also the procedure was now linked with the relatively unfamiliar word - '*ritvik*'." [EF 30 & 32 p. 98], [UC 16 p. 98]

This pretentious statement ignores the fact that Srila Prabhupada **did** continue to involve himself directly as a prospective initiator ("*India, I am here.*"), as confirmed elsewhere in TFO itself. This distinction is important, because the post-samadhi aspect of TFO's Ritvik-vada conclusion rests upon the notion that Srila Prabhupada had completely removed himself from the initiations system as of the July 9th Letter, thus proving it was intended as a post-samadhi solution. But **that is false**. TFO repeats the mistake in this paragraph, also suggesting that the selection of names would only be done by the *ritvik*s.

No evidence has been produced by TFO to substantiate the claim that prior to July 9th, 1977, letters sent out to new initiates were signed by Srila Prabhupada rather than by one of his

secretaries. Furthermore, the July 9th Letter does not state that letters sent out to new initiates will no longer be signed by Srila Prabhupada. In fact, **there is no such reference to a letter even going to the initiate.** The July 9th Letter itself refers to three other letters:

- 1) letters of recommendation sent by Temple Presidents to *rittik* representatives;
- 2) letters from the *rittik* representatives to Temple Presidents giving names or giving threads; and
- 3) letters from the *rittik* representatives to Srila Prabhupada, with names to be entered into his book.

And finally, TFO makes an error in the statement, "*Also the procedure was now linked with the relatively unfamiliar word - 'ritvik'.*" In fact, the unfamiliar term used in the July 9th Letter was '*rittik*', and this word was given added emphasis, being put in quotation marks. It is difficult to say that the word *rittik* was just a typo in the July 9th Letter. One would not tend to misspell an already unfamiliar word that they have just encased in quotation marks for emphasis. Srila Prabhupada had repeatedly used the word *ritvik* when preaching on Srimad Bhagavatam, but never in the context of initiations. Tamal Krishna specifically introduced the term *ritvik* in the May 28th Conversation, asking if that was a correct synonym, and Srila Prabhupada affirmed it. Why then, would we expect Tamal Krishna to suddenly change the spelling of the word, putting it in quotation marks, if he meant to emphasize the fact that this was the word used on May 28th?

We can speculate – but we cannot assign an absolute conclusion that *ritvik* and *rittik* are exactly the same. And in fact, in context, the two words are definitely **not** the same. One refers to diksa guru initiators functioning after Srila Prabhupada's departure, and the other refers to representatives assisting Prabhupada while he is present. Given two completely different meanings in context, it is certainly possible that Srila Prabhupada sanctioned the use of the *rittik* spelling by signing the letter -- not that he just missed a misspelled word (that happened to be emphatically set out in quotation marks).

Altogether, out of the four elements TFO characterizes above as being the "*most notable differences*" after the July 9th Letter, one is unsubstantiated, and the remaining three are completely wrong.

It's also interesting to consider the two '*notable differences*' contained in the July 9th Letter that TFO does not mention:

1. That "...*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple*"; and
2. "*The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book.*"

While TFO makes many claims to the contrary, here is exactly what the July 9th Letter instructs:

1. the appointment of 11 senior disciples to act as "*rittik*" - **representative of the acarya**, for the purpose of performing first and second initiation
2. that Temple Presidents **may henceforward** send recommendations for first and second initiation to whichever of the eleven representatives are nearest their temple
3. after considering a recommendation, the *rittik* representative **may** accept the devotee as an initiated disciple of Srila Prabhupada by giving a spiritual name or *gayatri*
4. the newly initiated devotees are disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the above eleven senior devotees having acted as His representatives in the initiations process
5. after receiving a letter from a *rittik* representative giving the spiritual name or the thread, the Temple President can perform a fire *yajna* in the temple
6. the name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative **to Srila Prabhupada**, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book

Another faulty line of argument put forward by TFO is this one:

"It is significant to note that within the July 9th letter it is stated three times that those initiated would become Srila Prabhupada's disciples. [EF 18 p. 63]

In fact, this is stated only **two times**. The third reference TFO appears to be pointing to is regarding the name of the new initiate to be sent to Srila Prabhupada.

Building upon the above incorrect assertion, TFO continues:

Thus the necessity to state Srila Prabhupada's ownership of future disciples must indicate that the instruction was intended to operate during a time period when the ownership could even have been an issue, namely after his departure." [EL 13 p. 63]

TFO says that because Srila Prabhupada had already made it clear that his disciples couldn't take their own disciples until he had departed, the inclusion of the statement 'three times' must mean it refers to after his departure, portending an era of post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa. Again, the statement is made only two times, not three. Even so, there are several possible reasons for repetitive mention. For example, Tamal Krishna may simply have felt it important to emphasize this point, and it was he who wrote the letter. The letter Tamal Krishna wrote closely resembled the contents of the July 7th Conversation, and in that conversation Tamal Krishna had inserted the statement twice.

What makes no sense at all is TFO's speculative conclusion, that rather than Srila Prabhupada arranging for the letter he signed to say outright, "this instruction will remain in place after my departure, and even then, all disciples will be my own", he would instead hint at it by repeating some other statement 'three times', as if it was code meant to inspire everyone to arrive at the same speculative conclusion. This is the very sort of ambiguous methodology TFO elsewhere claims that Srila Prabhupada would never engage in.

"Right at the beginning of the July 9th letter it is emphatically stated that those appointed are 'representatives' of Srila Prabhupada." [EF 19 p. 64]

This is not *emphatically* stated - there is no use of bold type, underlining, italics or capital letters to emphasize the word 'representatives'. Rather, the word is simply stated. What is emphasized is the term "*rittik*".

"As mentioned above, this point is hammered home **three times** in a letter which itself was quite short and to the point."

This error of fact is now escalated by TFO into a whole line of argument based on the notion of "three times stressed".

"So as soon as one thing is three times stressed, that means final."

(SP Bg. Lecture, 27/11/68, Los Angeles)

TFO does not present the above quote in context and when we study the context, we find that it obviates TFO's point entirely. In this lecture on *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, Srila Prabhupada is specifically referring to the grammatical rule of 'thrice repetition' found in sastra. He provides two examples: *bhaja govindam bhaja govindam bhaja govindam* and *harer nama harer nama harer nama*. And he reinforces the grammatical concept with an English example: "You do this, do this, do this". In all three cases, the triple repetition occurs within a single phrase – not that a statement happens to appear at three different places in the body of a letter.

There is one more important point, which we mention here only briefly because it is addressed in great detail in the 'May 28th Conversation' section. That is, the fact that the *rittik* representatives mentioned in the July 9th Letter are **NOT** one and the same personalities as the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* mentioned in the May 28th Conversation. On May 28th, Srila Prabhupada said that at some point, he would recommend *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* to conduct diksa initiations after his departure. The 11 *rittik* representatives mentioned in the July 9th Letter are **NOT** the same personalities. This incorrect assumption lies at the heart of both TFO and the GBC's *guru-tattva* position, and we fully repudiate this errant detail in DOR.

Considering the essential elements of the July 9th Letter, the following facts can't be ignored:

- the meeting in Vrndavana mentioned in the letter is not specified
- the letter refers, at least in part, to the July 7th Conversation in which men were named
- while the May 28th Conversation mentioned *ritviks*, the letter names *rittik representatives*

- the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* mentioned on May 28th were diksa initiators, after Prabhupada's departure
- these *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* were described as diksa gurus taking their own disciples – grand-disciples of Prabhupada
- the July 9th Letter contains no mention of *officiating acaryas* or *ritvik acaryas*
- the *ritviks* actually mentioned are *representatives of **the** acarya*, not themselves *acarya*
- the statement, "*to act as "ritvik" - representative of the acarya, for the purpose of performing initiations*" **does not say** 'give an agreement on Prabhupada's behalf, *in absentia* for him to accept new diksa disciples'
- nor does it say 'act as *officiating acarya/ritvik acarya* taking your own diksa disciples'
- there is no mention in the letter of initiations after Prabhupada's departure
- nor is there mention of an order that *must* be followed *henceforward*
- rather, a process is described that **may** be followed by Temple Presidents who **may** take a certain action
- and Temple Presidents **may** take that action *henceforward*
- the Temple Presidents have an alternative to taking that action ("*India, I am here*")
- and Srila Prabhupada will **continue** to participate in the system, receiving names for his book

The only way to imbue the July 9th Letter with a post-samadhi instruction is to go back to the May 28th Conversation – which TFO repudiates entirely as evidence. That's why TFO stresses a scenario that does not include Srila Prabhupada: TFO points to the July 7th statement "*wherever you deem it*"; raises the issue of who writes names in the book; introduces the letters of Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta and Kirtanananda; and calls the Will and Codicil into evidence. But all these efforts fail.

Taking all this together, it becomes abundantly evident that TFO and the Ritvik-vada movement based upon it are constructed upon a foundation of falsity and asiddhanta.

Characterizations of the Letter

Scope of Distribution

Throughout TFO, there are several instances where the scope of distribution of the July 9th Letter is misstated or misrepresented. **[EF 1 p. 8]**, **[C 4 p. 18 & 6 p. 72]**, **[AE 1 p. 8 & 6 p. 36]**, and **[EL 22 p. 88]**. In fact, the letter was addressed to:

"All G.B.C., and Temple Presidents"

Several times, TFO states that the letter was sent out to the "*entire Movement*". In some cases, this misrepresentation is connected to a particular argument being made by TFO. For example, TFO states:

"Since the July 9th letter really is the final instruction on initiation within ISKCON, addressed as it was to the entire Movement, it must be viewed in a category of its own."

In reality, there is no connection between the manner of addressing the letter ("*as it was*"), supposedly to the "*entire movement*", that relates to the intended timing of instructions contained in the letter.

Referring to letters between Srila Prabhupada's senior men, TFO states:

"Even if such letters as these did allude to some other type of guru system, they still could not be used to modify the final July 9th order since these instructions were not repeated to the rest of the Movement."

Again, TFO ties an assertion about the nature of the July 9th order to the scope of its distribution, but misrepresents that scope.

Elsewhere in TFO we read:

"The above then does not represent grounds for supplanting the explicit instruction of July 9th, an order that was distributed to the whole Movement as a specific policy document."

TFO implies a connection between their characterization of the July 9th Letter as a "*policy document*" and the fact that it was "*distributed to the whole Movement*". But the letter was not distributed to the 'whole Movement', which was comprised of thousands of initiated and uninitiated devotees at the time.

Likewise, TFO makes this emphatic statement:

"The July 9th letter was a procedural instruction, or management policy document, which was sent to every leader in the Movement."

But in fact, there were many leaders in the Movement aside from the Temple Presidents and GBC's.

The Letter as a Type of Instrument

Throughout TFO, the author assigns a variety of labels to the July 9th Letter, calling it '*the final order*', a '*procedural instruction*', a '*management policy document*', and an '*initiation policy document*'. Whether TFO means to suggest that each one of these instruments is synonymous with the others, or that each different label describes some particular, unique characteristic of the Letter, is not explained. We do know that Srila Prabhupada did not call the July 9th Letter by any of these names. And in fact, a few of the names are incorrectly applied.

For example, it is incorrect to call the July 9th Letter an *initiation policy document*. A policy document does not in itself legislate something, but rather sets policy for how something that has been legislated is to now be followed. TFO appends the descriptor 'policy document', saying the letter sets down the absolute law for future initiations in ISKCON. But the instrument that legislates is not the same as a *policy document* that describes how a law is to be followed. [AE 3 p. 10], [3]. The point is, the author of TFO applies labels loosely and inappropriately to the letter.

In TFO's counter to Objection #4, it offers the following characterization of the July 9th Letter:

"This 'letters v books' argument does not apply in this case since this was no ordinary letter. Generally, Srila Prabhupada wrote a letter in response to a specific query from an individual disciple, or to offer individualised guidance or chastisement. Naturally, in these cases the devotee's original query, situation or deviation may give grounds for interpretation. Not everything in Srila Prabhupada's letters can be applied universally (for example in one letter he advised a devotee, who was not good with spices, to just cook with a little salt and tumeric; clearly this advice was not meant for the entire Movement). However, the final order on initiation is not open to any such interpretation since it was not written in response to a specific query from a particular individual, [EF 24 p. 75] or to address a disciple's individual situation or behaviour."

In fact, Srila Prabhupada wrote many letters that were managerial in nature, and not in response to a devotee's query or offering guidance or chastisement. The more essential argument here is that it's not what form the Spiritual Master's instructions take, but what the instructions comprise.

We also take note of TFO's error in stating that the July 9th Letter was not "*written in response to a specific query from a particular individual*". As the July 7th Conversation clearly shows, the portion of the conversation that was memorialized two days later in the July 9th Letter began with a statement by Tamal Krishna, who was indeed **a particular individual making a specific query**.

TFO states:

"The letter follows the format of any important instruction that Srila Prabhupada issued and wanted followed without interpretation - he had it put in writing, he approved it, and then sent it to his leaders. [EF 25 p. 76] For example, he had one sent on April 22nd, 1972, addressed to 'ALL TEMPLE PRESIDENTS':"

In fact, Srila Prabhupada gave countless important instructions that he wanted the devotees to follow, without interpretation. His lectures and room conversations are replete with such instructions. All these instructions have issued forth from the lips of the pure devotee, and all are therefore Absolute in nature. Putting all these instructions in writing, approving them by signature and sending them out to his leaders was the exception, not the rule. So to suggest that the July 9th Letter followed a special format that somehow marks it as a particularly important instruction that should be particularly followed without interpretation in comparison to all the

other important instructions, is incorrect. And among the many other important instructions not to be interpreted or changed are those contained in the body of sastra that represent the standing instructions for continuation of the disciplic succession after the departure of the Spiritual Master.

Henceforward

As part of its so-called 'historical account' of events, mentioned above, TFO claims:

"Srila Prabhupada instructed that this 'officiating acarya' system was to be instituted immediately, and run from that time onwards, or 'henceforward'"

In fact, the July 9th Letter contains no mention of "*officiating acarya*", and no mention of an "*officiating acarya system*". The letter refers to *rittik*, not *ritvik* representatives, and these *rittik*s are **representatives** of the acarya, not themselves **acarya**. There is no mention of an order that "must" be followed. Rather, the letter describes a process in which the Temple Presidents may take a certain action, and states that the Temple Presidents may take that action '*henceforward*'. It also says that Srila Prabhupada will continue to participate in the system, receiving names for his book.

What the July 9th Letter actually states is completely different from the way TFO represents it.

The July 9th Letter says, "*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation*". The term '*henceforward*' in this sentence refers specifically to what the Temple Presidents may do, **not** to what the 11 representatives may do. There is no '*henceforward*' instruction given to the 11 *rittik* representatives other than, de facto, that they would obviously be the recipients of any letters the Temple Presidents **may chose** to send to them. TFO argues that *henceforward* is a one-word instruction for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system, but that is a gross misrepresentation of the facts.

Even if one accepted the meaning attributed to the word *henceforward* by the author of TFO, there is a qualifying boundary established by the July 9th Letter. It is found in the last statement of the letter, which says that the names of the new initiates are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada. That step in the process cannot take place if Srila Prabhupada is no longer present.

And of course, there is another natural boundary inherent in the July 9th Letter – the length of the lifetimes of the 11 named *rittik* representatives. No mention is made in the letter about a process for replacing *rittik*s as the 11 men become incapacitated or leave their bodies. TFO suggests that this is to be accomplished by way of Srila Prabhupada's Will and Codicil, but that notion is soundly defeated in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*.

Those Ritviks who say '*henceforward*' means '10,000 years' often suggest that Srila Prabhupada meant for the GBC to make replacements for the 11 men, although the July 9th Letter contains no instruction for them to do so. While TFO vehemently insists that the July 9th Letter be taken

literally and absolutely, on this point the author, like most Ritvik-vadis, is willing to bend and move beyond the scope of the letter. Instead, the Ritvik-vadis insert into the process their own formulated solution for indefinite extension of the system, justifying it by suggesting that if the GBC were properly functioning, they would handle this task and the Ritviks wouldn't have to take such liberties. But again, the July 9th Letter makes no such provision, no matter how perfectly or how poorly the GBC are functioning. This element of longevity **cannot** be derived from the July 9th Letter. It can only be inferred based on the Will and Codicil, and again, that notion is soundly defeated in DOR.

TFO argues that the entire July 9th Letter is imbued with a time factor beyond the scope of 'henceforward', given that a) Srila Prabhupada had for many years employed a *ritvik* system for initiations during his lila; b) that this was an evolving system; and c) that he intentionally progressed that system to its culmination, expressed in the July 9th Letter by the establishment of a permanent system for post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa, *henceforward*.

But Srila Prabhupada never referred to his pre-1977 initiation system as a *ritvik* system. We suggest that it can more accurately be described as a *siksa* system, i.e., a system wherein *siksas* assisted the *diksa guru*. And while the system did evolve, it could more accurately be described as having evolved away from the sort of *ritvik* system Srila Prabhupada instructed to assist him during his lila, insofar as it wasn't functioning properly for much of 1977.

Given the weakness of its 'henceforward' position, it's not surprising that TFO also relies upon arguments of grammar and definition. For example, TFO states:

"The specific word used, 'henceforward', only has one meaning, viz. 'from now onwards'. This is both according to Srila Prabhupada's own previous usage of the word and the meaning ascribed to it by the English Language. Unlike other words, the word henceforward is unambiguous since it only possesses one dictionary definition."

[EF 14 p. 30]

The definition of 'henceforward' is not so simple as to have 'only one meaning'. Legal definitions of the term [10] refer to the root word of the adverb, *henceforth* which, through the legal concept of 'plain language', is directly linked to *henceforward*. *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, (2nd edition, 2008) states that the term, when used in a legal document, statute, or other legal instrument, indicates that **"something will commence from the present time to the future, to the exclusion of the past"**. Note this definition says **"to** the future", not 'for all future time', or 'forever', and puts equal emphasis on distinguishing past and future from present.

In *Burton's Legal Thesaurus* (2007, McGraw-Hill), the following definitions are given:

"from here on in, from now on, from this day forward, from this day on, from this moment in time on, from this point forward, from this point in time forward, hereafter, **immediately**, in the future, **starting tomorrow**, **subsequently**, thereafter"

At least three of the given definitions (bolded) clearly attribute a legal meaning to '*henceforward*' that is different than the notion of 'forever' put forward by TFO.

"On the other 86 occasions **[UC 6 p. 31]** that we find on Folio where Srila Prabhupada has used the word '*henceforward*', nobody raised even the possibility that the word could mean anything other than 'from now onwards'." **[AE 5 p. 32] [EL 5 p. 32]**

TFO does not provide citations for this claim. As we demonstrate in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* with respect to TFO's usage of the term '*ritvik*' and its derivations, its counts from the Folio have not proved to be accurate. Nor does TFO inform the reader as to what version of the Folio it finds these 86 instances of '*henceforward*' in.

Folio 2.0 (1990) provides 91 matches for the term '*henceforward*', **[11]** and Folio 4.11 (1997) gives in excess of 100 matches for '*henceforward*'. We are left to guess which of these references TFO bases its assertion on, and which references it did not count.

It would be impossible for TFO's author to know whether or not, at the time the word '*henceforward*' was used by Srila Prabhupada, there were individuals who heard, read or otherwise received it, and questioned its meaning. Besides, a clear use of the term in one circumstance offers no assurance at all that it will be understood in some other context, in another circumstance.

Because other devotees have written copiously and very effectively in arguing against TFO's interpretation of the term '*henceforward*', we will not repeat that material here. Instead, we refer the reader to the following documents, which make it clear that '*henceforward*' is not synonymous with '*post-samadhi*', and that the definition TFO attributes to '*henceforward*' is not congruent with common parlance or with legal definitions of the term, nor does the standing body of examples of Srila Prabhupada's use of the word demonstrate that he only used '*henceforward*' in the way TFO suggests.

- [10]** Definitions of 'Henceforth' - Burton's Legal Dictionary
- [11]** Folio 2.0 (1990) – 'Henceforward'
- [12]** Vanipedia – 'Henceforward'
- [13a]** *The 'Henceforward' Bluff* - Part 1
- [13b]** *The 'Henceforward' Bluff* - Part 2
- [31]** *Disciple Of My Disciple* - Part 3, 'An Analysis of the Word 'Henceforward'

TFO admits:

"Furthermore the argument that the whole *ritvik* system 'hangs' on one word - henceforward - is untenable, since even if we take the word *out* of the letter, nothing has changed."

Here, TFO makes an error of logic repeated often in its thesis – it attempts to bridge the *officiating acarya(s)/ ritvik acarya(s)* in the May 28th Conversation over to the *rittik representative* in the July 9th Letter. But the two cannot be bridged. Thus, following TFO's claim that even the word '*henceforward*' is not necessary for its argument to be viable, upon completing the section below on the May 28th Conversation, the reader will see that TFO's Ritvik-vada position is utterly baseless.

Rittik, not ritvik

The word that appears in the July 9th Letter is spelled "*rittik*", not "*ritvik*", as it appears in so many transcripts. The fact that the word is placed in quotation marks for emphasis is very striking. TFO states:

"Right at the beginning of the July 9th letter it is emphatically stated that those appointed are 'representatives' of Srila Prabhupada."

As noted above, TFO incorrectly states that the word '*representatives*' is emphasized. It is not *emphatically* stated - there is no use of bolding, underlining, italics or capital letters to emphasize the word 'representatives'. What is emphasized, however, is the term "***rittik***".

As demonstrate in our article, "Evidence Tampering: Rtvik Sleight of Hand", [\[9\]](#) members of the Ritvik community have been playing very loose with words when it comes to making public representations of the text of the July 9th Letter.

As the author of TFO knows, the actual text of the July 9th Letter says "*rittik*", not "*ritvik*". The correct spelling appears in TFO's Appendices in the text copy of the July 9th Letter, and once in its counter-argument to Objection #25. Everywhere else however, TFO has continuously misrepresented the word. No mention is made of the fact that this critically important word is spelled differently in the July 9th Letter Srila Prabhupada signed. Even in the section where TFO lists words found in sastra with a similar Sanskrit derivation as "*ritvik*" (Objection #1, 'The 'Appointment Tape' section), it does not mention this issue of different spellings. TFO misrepresents the word both in spelling, and in assigning contextual meaning to it.

Srila Prabhupada's presence and participation

One of the claims repeatedly made in TFO is that Srila Prabhupada had removed himself completely from participation in the initiations system. TFO says he did so by way of his instructions and arrangements in his Will, in the May 28th Conversation, the July 7th Conversation, and the July 9th Letter. In DOR, we have defeated TFO's notion in relationship to every one of these sources of instruction.

Referring to the July 9th Letter, TFO states:

"Srila Prabhupada thus handed over to the representatives total power of attorney [EF 8 p. 17] over who could receive initiation, he made it clear that from that time onwards he was no longer to be consulted." [EF 9 p. 17]

But the July 9th Letter **does not say** that Srila Prabhupada is *"no longer to be consulted"*, nor is there a single thing contained within the letter to indicate that Srila Prabhupada *"made it clear that from that time onwards he was no longer to be consulted."*

If Srila Prabhupada had really 'made it clear that he was no longer to be consulted', then one could rightly assume that if the devotees did consult him, i.e., if they did put a question to him on a matter of initiation sometime after this July 7th Conversation, they would be disobeying his instruction. Obviously, that is not the case. Of course the devotees would feel free to **consult** with Srila Prabhupada on matters of initiation. And specifically, someone recommending a candidate in India to Srila Prabhupada (*"India, I am here"*) would not be faulted for consulting him on a question.

TFO would like to convey the notion that Srila Prabhupada was specifically and completely opting out of the entire initiations process, turning it all over to the 11 named representatives, but that is simply not the case. **TFO is mis-representing the facts.**

TFO's assertion in this regard correlates to a later comment made under Objection #3, at the end of the 'Appointment Tape' section. There, TFO ties the *'no longer to be consulted'* idea to the July 7th Conversation:

"without waiting for me, wherever you consider it is right. That will depend on discretion." [EL 23 p. 93]

As we have shown above, the phrase "wherever you consider it is right" could just as likely be referring to adding names to the list in geographic regions, as meaning what TFO asserts – that Srila Prabhupada is removing himself entirely from the process.

In its counter-argument to Objection #10, TFO characterizes the Ritvik system as follows:

"The most notable difference after July 9th, 1977 was that the acceptance of new disciples would now be done by representatives without recourse to Srila Prabhupada. [EF 30 p. 98] The letter, which was sent out to new initiates, would no longer be signed by Srila Prabhupada, [UC 16 p. 98] [EF 31 p. 98] and the selection of all the initiates' names would be done by the *ritviks*. [EF 30 p. 98]

This statement ignores the fact that Srila Prabhupada **did** continue to involve himself directly as a prospective initiator (*"India, I am here"*). That fact is confirmed elsewhere by TFO itself. This distinction is important, because the post-samadhi aspect of TFO's Ritvik conclusion rests, in large part, upon the notion that Srila Prabhupada had completely removed himself from the initiations system as of the July 9th Letter, thus proving it was intended as a post-samadhi solution. But **that is incorrect.**

The following statement in TFO harkens back to its argument on '*thrice stated*', in which it claims that three times in the July 9th Letter, it says that the initiated disciples will be Srila Prabhupada's. As we've noted above, this is only stated twice in the letter, not thrice. TFO also applies this argument to its assertion that Srila Prabhupada had completely removed himself from the initiations system as of July 9th:

"Srila Prabhupada's emphasis on disciple ownership would therefore have been completely redundant were the system to operate only in his presence, especially since as long as he was present he could personally ensure that no one claimed false ownership of the disciples." [EL 14 p. 65]

As history shows, the fact that Srila Prabhupada was physically present was no guarantee that he did not have to repeat or emphasize his instructions in order to have them followed – not only with respect to initiations, but on so many other subjects as well. Even though Srila Prabhupada was physically present, the disciples sometimes did not follow his instructions, resulting in situations like the bottleneck of candidates. No matter how heartfelt or affectionately that decision may have been made, it happened, and it does qualify as an example of instructions not being followed. Furthermore, the newly named 11 *ritviks* still did not properly perform their duties from July 9th until Srila Prabhupada's departure, in November – another four months. During that period the *ritvik* system was barely functional. Only 234 disciples were initiated, and just three months later, thousands were initiated by the new Zonal Acaryas. So nearly a whole year passed while Srila Prabhupada was physically present, and during that time his senior men, who became the appointed *ritvik* representatives, did not follow his instructions all the while with respect to one of the most central, all-important tasks in the whole Sankirtan Movement – the initiation of qualified disciples.

On Writing Names in the Book

One of the arguments TFO repeatedly asserts is designed to counter the effect of the very last statement of instruction in the July 9th Letter (emphasis added):

"The name of a newly initiated disciple should be sent by the representative who has accepted him or her to Srila Prabhupada, to be included in His Divine Grace's "Initiated Disciples" book."

Because TFO's entire post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory depends upon Krishnakant's ability to convince devotees that Srila Prabhupada had completely removed himself from the initiation process, numerous arguments are aimed at eliminating this problematic last statement in the letter. TFO states:

"...the names given by the ritviks would be entered by Tamal Krsna Goswami into the 'initiated disciples' book. Thus, externally at least, Srila Prabhupada would not even have

been aware of the disciple's existence. Consequently, the process now would be the same as it was then, since the ritvik has full power of attorney."

Here, TFO confirms its understanding of the July 7th Conversation, saying that it is Tamal Krishna who will enter names into the book (not Srila Prabhupada). This substantiates the fact that when Srila Prabhupada says, "*India, I am here*", he is not saying that in India, he will write names in the book. He is saying that in India, he will participate in conducting initiations.

The July 9th Letter does not say who will write names in the book, but it **does** say that names are to be **sent to Srila Prabhupada** to be included in his book. Thus, as the recipient of names being sent in for the book (regardless of who actually writes the names in the book), Srila Prabhupada would certainly be a participant in the system, and would be aware of a new disciple's existence.

TFO argues:

"The July 9th letter states that the names of newly initiated disciples were to be sent 'to Srila Prabhupada' - Could this indicate that the system was only to run while Srila Prabhupada was physically present? Some devotees have argued that since we can no longer send these names to Srila Prabhupada, the ritvik system must therefore be invalid."

As TFO rolls out its list of alternative ideas that might serve as work-around's for this problematic final instruction, a significant demonstration of hypocrisy becomes evident. When convenient, TFO emphasizes the necessity of taking statements **absolutely**, at (what the author believes to be) face value, **without any interpretation** beyond the dictionary definition of a word, as in the case of '*henceforward*'. But if TFO is made to apply that standard to the July 9th Letter, it must admit that it does indeed say the **names are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada** – not to his *ritvik* representatives or secretaries – but to Prabhupada himself. And this indicates that His Divine Grace must still be in his manifest lila in order for the process, as described in the July 9th Letter, to go on.

For TFO to suggest that '*henceforward*' – a single word, open to interpretation even in its dictionary definition, what to speak of in the context of Srila Prabhupada's usage and sastra – must be taken in a certain way **absolutely**, then to turn around and suggest that another concrete statement should be ignored, or that great liberties should be taken with the statement, to the degree that it amounts to a complete rejection of the instruction, is the height of hypocrisy.

"Further evidence that the names should be sent for inclusion in the book, and NOT specifically to Srila Prabhupada is given in the letter written to Hansaduta, **[EF 21 p. 67]** the very next day, where Tamala Krishna Goswami explains his new ritvik duties to him:"

"...you should send their names to be included in Srila Prabhupada's 'Initiated Disciples' book."

(Letter to Hansaduta from Tamala Krishna Goswami, 10/7/77)

This quoted statement by Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta says **absolutely nothing** about who the names should be sent to. The letter to Hansadutta simply doesn't state that piece of information. The fact that a specific recipient is not named does **not** equate with 'do not send names to Prabhupada', or 'do not specifically send to Prabhupada', or 'send the names to Tamal Krishna'.

"There is no mention made here of needing to send the names to Srila Prabhupada. This procedure could easily have continued after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure."

It does not matter what is or isn't included in a letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta. That is not a determining factor for what is or isn't included in the July 9th Letter. Likewise, it doesn't matter if the procedure could go on of sending names so someone/anyone could enter them into the book after Prabhupada's departure. **That has nothing to do with the fact that the July 9th Letter says send the names "to Prabhupada".**

"Nowhere in the final order does it state that if the "Initiated Disciples" book becomes physically separated from Srila Prabhupada all initiations must be suspended."

Nor does it state that if the sky falls, or the *yuga* annihilation occurs, that initiations must be suspended. There are countless things that the July 9th Letter does not say. We are concerned with what it **does** say.

Given that Krishnakant cannot produce a sensible argument to make the July 9th statement about 'sending names to Srila Prabhupada' disappear, he next attempts to carve the problem up into thinner slices, of "pre-initiation" and "post-initiation" activities. But no matter what arbitrary divisions he assigns to the process of initiations instructed in the July 9th Letter, the fact remains – the letter instructs that names for the book are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada. And the existence of this statement in the July 9th Letter patently contradicts TFO's assertion that the letter establishes a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. Having to send names to Srila Prabhupada cannot go on if Srila Prabhupada is no longer physically manifest.

"Whether or not names can be sent to Srila Prabhupada has no bearing on the system for initiation, since at the point where new names are ready to be sent, the initiation has already occurred." [WJ 3 p. 68]

Making such a statement is no different than making any other presumptuous change to the prescribed system. One might as well proclaim that two of the eleven *rittiks* shall be ignored from now on, or it doesn't matter if the Temple Presidents send letters of recommendation... if a *ritvik* decides to initiate someone, it doesn't matter where the recommendation came from, or whether a candidate has even **been** recommended. But no such arbitrary changes can be made, nor can any one element be capriciously cut and discarded. Yet here, TFO is essentially suggesting that no matter what Srila Prabhupada's instructions are, if the last step is discarded, too bad... it's too late, the initiation has already happened.

"The last point is that if sending the names to Srila Prabhupada were a vital part of the ceremony, then even before Srila Prabhupada's departure, the system would have been invalid, or at least run the constant risk of being so. [AE 8 p. 68] [EL 15 & 16 p. 68] It was generally understood that Srila Prabhupada was ready to leave at any time, thus the danger of not having anywhere to send the names was present from day one of the order being issued. In other words, taking the possible scenario that Srila Prabhupada leaves the planet the day after a disciple has been initiated through the *ritvik* system, according to the above proposition, the disciple would not actually have been initiated simply because of the speed by which mail is delivered."

It is offensive and erroneous to assume that one aspect or element of the Spiritual Master's instructions may be ignored or rejected, because the so-called follower judges it to be 'less than vital'.

TFO's statement, *"if sending the names to Srila Prabhupada were a vital part of the ceremony, then even before Srila Prabhupada's departure, the system would have been invalid"* also represents an error of logic. No matter what was going on before Prabhupada's departure, or how a follower of his might choose to interpret what he thought the circumstances were, that has no bearing on the instructions given in the July 9th Letter. Srila Prabhupada did not frame his instructions based on how countless followers might be interpreting current events.

We should also take note of the speculative nature of TFO's argument, above. Because Srila Prabhupada was nearing the time of his departure, an element of his instructed system was 'at risk' that he might depart at any time, therefore we are to conclude that an element of the system is not 'vital' because of the risk. That is TFO's assertion.

One could say that anything and everything was 'constantly at risk' as the time of Srila Prabhupada's departure approached, but that never had anything to do with his standing instructions. Srila Prabhupada's instructions were not tied to some variable risk management scale, so that the devotees would know which instructions to follow only a little, or which ones to ignore entirely based on some speculative scale of risk.

"Certainly there would be nothing preventing the names of new initiates being entered into His Divine Grace's *"Initiated Disciples"* book even now. This book could then be offered to Srila Prabhupada at a fitting time."

Whether or not names could be entered in the book after Srila Prabhupada's departure has **nothing** to do with the existence of, or the intention inherent in, the instruction that is undeniably contained in the July 9th Letter – that names were to be **sent to Srila Prabhupada**. Not that names could be sent somewhere else, to some other person... not that something else could be sent in place of names... not that 40 years later, names could still be written in the book if only someone would send them... not any one of the myriad variations of activity the mind might conceive of changes the July 9th instruction.

The July 9th Letter simply says that names are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada. TFO cannot accept that fact, because it completely contradicts its post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory.

Given TFO's emphasis on the precedence of 'last instructions', it is quite disingenuous that Krishnakant should argue in favor of ignoring this final instruction in the letter. But instead of accepting the order as it is, TFO employs numerous tactics to try and squirm around the very obvious 'final order', that names should be sent to Srila Prabhupada:

- TFO attempts to shift the focus onto the *purpose* of names being included in a book;
- TFO says someone other than Prabhupada will do the *entering* of names in the book;
- TFO notes a letter Tamal Krishna wrote to Hansadutta about names in the book [EL 2 p. 19];
- TFO says names could *still be entered* even if Srila Prabhupada was not here;
- TFO points out that the July 9th Letter does not say that *if the book gets separated* from Srila Prabhupada, initiations must stop;
- TFO introduces the word jugglery of '*pre-initiation*' and '*post-initiation*' activities;
- and finally, TFO attempts to invalidate the instruction on the basis that the initiations *system was at risk* that an initiation might take place just before Srila Prabhupada departed, and he wouldn't be there to receive the name sent for entering in the book, thus this final step is not vital.

This is how the author of *The Final Order* deals with the final instruction contained within the July 9th Letter – a final order that TFO says is synonymous with Sankaracarya's '*bhaja Govinda*' and Sri Krsna's final order, "*Always think of Me and become My devotee*".

WILL & CODICIL

In a section entitled 'Subsequent Instructions', TFO argues that Srila Prabhupada's Will and Codicil stand as evidence in support of its post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory. It is unclear why the Will is categorized as a 'subsequent instruction' (i.e., subsequent to the July 9th Letter), when in fact it predates the July 9th Letter by more than a month.

In the Appendices of TFO, the text of Srila Prabhupada's Will shows a date – "*DATE; 5th June 1977*" located just before the recital at the top of the document. On the actual copy of the Will [16 a] we see a date at the top of the document that says June 1977, with no specific day noted. At the bottom of the one-page document are two hand-written dates, "*6th June 1977*", followed by "*7th*", with the "*6th*" scratched out. Srila Prabhupada has signed the document lengthwise along the left margin.

Nowhere on either page 1 of 2 [16 b] of the Will does the date *5th June 1977* appear, although that is the date given in TFO's version of the document, in its Appendices. This would appear to be an unfortunate error on Krishnakant's part, as there are few documents in the world for which the date is known to be as crucial as in the matter of a Last Will and Testament.

The Codicil is presented in TFO with the date, 5th November 1977. Srila Prabhupada refers in the Codicil to **his previous Will dated 4th June, 1977**, but the date on the Will referred to above, as presented by TFO, was initially dated 6th June, and final dated 7th June 1977 – **not 4th June**. Whether or not another copy of Srila Prabhupada's Will exists, dated 4th June, 1977, we cannot say, but it's important to note that Srila Prabhupada **refers to this 4th June date three times in the Codicil**. The repeated references in the Codicil to a June 4th Will certainly opens the Codicil to scrutiny, as it is associated to a Will of a different date.

We do have one additional piece of evidence that substantiates the existence of a Will dated earlier than the one signed 6th/7th June. That evidence is found in the transcript of the June 2nd Conversation (emphasis added):

Ramesvara: "Properties outside of India on principle should never be sold."

Tamala Krsna: So this will will take a little bit of time to get all those lists and everything together. In the meantime **we have that other will**.

Prabhupada: Hm?

Tamala Krsna: In the meantime **we have that short, brief will**. And this may take a little time to...

Tamal Krishna's mention of another "*short, brief will*" adds weight to the idea that the Codicil was meant to be appended to an earlier version of the Will – a 4th June version, not the signed 6th/7th June version presented in TFO. Given the question as to whether or not this Codicil is a relevant document in relationship to the June 6th/7th Will, we must likewise question the weight the Codicil should be given in the context of TFO's arguments. If the Codicil was attached to an earlier Will, and not re-drawn or revised to refer to the later Will, then from a legal standpoint it would be open to challenge. Nonetheless, we will offer some additional comments on it, in order to thoroughly rebut TFO's asserting it as evidence in support of its Ritvik-vada conclusion.

TFO states:

"Once the *ritvik* system was up and running, [C 3 p. 12 & 5 p. 21] Srila Prabhupada never issued a subsequent order to stop it, nor did he ever state that it should be disbanded on his departure. Perhaps aware that such a thing may mistakenly or otherwise occur, he put in the beginning of his final will that the **system of management** in place [EL 8 p. 42] within ISKCON must continue and could not be changed..."

TFO suggests that Srila Prabhupada made mention of the *system of management* right at the **beginning** of his final will because he somehow associated it with the potential disbanding of his *ritvik* system. But there is no such indication found anywhere.

One of the key assertions TFO makes about the Will is that the *system of management* Srila Prabhupada referred to encompasses his system for initiations. Therefore, it says, since the Will states that this *system of management* "must continue and could not be changed", this serves as proof of Srila Prabhupada's intention to establish a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system.

In fact, the Will does not say that this system of management *must continue* and *cannot be changed*. What it says is:

"The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change."

Although TFO asserts that the Will instructs that the *ritvik* system ordered on July 9th *must continue* and *cannot be changed*, the Will was executed more than a month before the July 9th Letter was signed. Therefore, the Will is referring to the system in place at the time the Will was drawn up. And if that system is ordered to continue without change, then the system instructed on July 9th obviates the system being protected under the Will.

TFO makes the further point that the Codicil, executed just nine days before Srila Prabhupada's departure, also affirmed that the Will stands, therefore this is the very final order – which it says is an order that the July 9th system must be a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. But no matter how you arrange the pieces, the evidence does not fit. The Codicil does not affirm the July 9th Letter.

A System of Management

TFO argues that when the Will refers to a '*system of management*' it means to encompass matters related to initiation, and it suggests this bolsters the notion carried forward from the July 9th Letter that *ritvik* diksa is to be practiced *henceforward*, becoming a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system upon Srila Prabhupada's departure. Because its argument cannot be carried on the strength of '*henceforward*', TFO obviously hopes to reinforce its argument by welding together the July 9th Letter and the Will. But what indicators are there in Srila Prabhupada's Will that this '*system of management*' refers to initiations? In fact, **there are no such indicators**.

The terminology used in the Will refers to the GBC (**managing**) body, to the method of oversight for (**managed**) properties, and to the system of **management**. Taking items #1 and #2 together, thus far the 'system of management' is comprised of managers (the GBC) and managed assets. There is absolutely nothing here to suggest that the management of an initiation system is being referred to. And this fact is borne out in the remainder of the Will.

All references to '**management**' contained in the entire Will relate to four things:

- who the managers will be;
- what roles they will be assigned;
- term of the role and how vacancies or derelictions of duty will be dealt with; and
- what the objects of their management are.

In addition to a reference to the GBC body, there are references made in the Will to 28 individuals who will manage specific movable and immovable properties; 7 of these persons are also executors of the Will. There are 4 categorical references made to immovable properties (real estate) and 71 references made to specific immovable (real estate) properties. There are 4 categorical references made to the roles these persons will fulfill (executive director, GBC committee member), along with a paragraph describing the term of roles and how vacancies are to be handled. In addition to listed real estate properties, the other movable and immovable properties that are to be managed include various bank accounts.

This represents the sum total of all instructions contained within Srila Prabhupada's Will. It is obvious that the entire Will refers to the management of movable and immovable properties, solely and only. It does **not** mention or infer in any way, shape or form that it refers to spiritual processes like initiation. It is folly to suggest that somehow or other, in the context of the Will, the term "management system" refers to the process of initiations.

In his Will, Srila Prabhupada initially stated that the *"Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness."* He then stated that ISKCON *"Properties in India will be managed by the following executive directors"*. In the Will, he did not differentiate between Governing Body Commission members and executive directors, either indicating that they were one and the same, or different. Later he referred to *GBC committee members* and again, he did not differentiate or say that they were one and the same with either the Governing Body Commission members or the executive directors. Historically, there has appeared to be consensus among the devotees in their understanding that Governing Body Commission members, 'executive directors' and 'GBC committee members' are all one and the same – GBC members – but that is not specifically stated in the Will and is therefore open to interpretation.

In the July 9th Letter, Tamal Krsna mentions that while the GBC members were with Srila Prabhupada in Vrndavana, he indicated that he would appoint some senior disciples to act as *"rittik"* representatives. These *rittik*s, the eleven senior devotees, are distinguished from the Temple Presidents in the letter. Nowhere in the July 9th Letter does Srila Prabhupada refer to the "GBC committee members" or "executive directors" who are mentioned in the Will. Clearly, however, the *Governing Body Commission (GBC)* mentioned in the Will is comprised of the very same personalities mentioned in the July 9th Letter: *all of the GBC members were with His Divine Grace.*

The July 9th Letter does not say that all of the eleven senior devotees being named as *rittik*s are GBC members, nor does it say the contrary. The July 9th Letter differentiates the Temple Presidents from the *rittik* representatives, but does not make an exclusive statement in this regard, i.e., that Temple Presidents may not also be GBC members, or *rittik* representatives. And in fact, some of the named 11 representatives were, at the time, effectively serving in the role of Temple Presidents. But the Letter simply refers to them independently, specific to particular functions.

There is no connection whatsoever between the named parties in the July 9th Letter and those named in the Will, except insofar as the GBC members are referred to in both documents. However, the references to the GBC members in no way indicate that these GBC members have anything at all to do with the initiations process. It is simply that the GBC members were also with Srila Prabhupada in Vrindavan when Srila Prabhupada indicated that he would be appointing some senior disciples. Not only does the Will not mention even once the initiations process, it also does not refer to the individuals involved in that process.

In his Will, Srila Prabhupada set down a process for filling vacancies in the executive director role, and for dealing with directors who fail to act. Nowhere is it suggested that if the 11 *rittik* representatives fail to act, they can be replaced by other executive directors (different individuals with different roles). TFO's assertion that the Will 'manages the initiations process' fails in that regard, as well.

"1. I have created, developed and organized the International Society for Krishna Consiousness, and as such I hereby will that none of the immovable properties standing in the name of ISKCON in India shall ever be mortgaged, borrowed against, sold, transferred, or in any way encumbered, disposed of, or alionated. This direction is irrevoable."

The last sentence is quite interesting. Of all the statements in the Will, this one alone received Srila Prabhupada's particular emphasis: do not indebt or in any way dispose of the India temple properties. Not only does the Will not make even a loose mention of the initiations process, it certainly does not say that post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa is an irrevocable process. Just the opposite – under the auspices of the Will, initiation is simply not mentioned at all.

There is evidence available that helps us to understand Srila Prabhupada's intent in drafting the Will, and the reason certain terminology was employed in it. In his room conversation with the devotees on June 2, 1977, [15] Srila Prabhupada engaged in a long discussion of a draft of the Will that had been drawn up. In that conversation, there was absolutely no discussion about anything remotely related to the initiations process: not the *rittik* representatives, not the Temple Presidents, and not the GBC in association with the Temple Presidents and *rittik*s involved in the initiations process.

Clearly, Srila Prabhupada made it known that in his mind, the issue of management being addressed in the Will had to do with management of temple properties:

Giriraja: So we drafted a will, including the trust for the properties of India and some of the other...

Prabhupada: Will? Will, there will be direction that "Management should be done like this." That's all.

Giriraja: Yes.

Prabhupada: Nobody can say in court case that "This temple will be in charge of this person, this temple..."

The Will spells out Srila Prabhupada's intent in this regard, going into great detail and focusing almost entirely on the subject of which named directors are in charge of which temple properties.

The November 5th, 1977 Codicil

In the Codicil, Srila Prabhupada is giving both new and more specific details as to certain financial arrangements he is making for family members. Referring to steps to be taken on the ISKCON side of these arrangements, Srila Prabhupada uses the term "authorities of ISKCON" rather than the "GBC Commission", "executive directors" or "GBC committee members" he mentions in the Will.

We have already dispensed with the notion that the Codicil "left intact" what TFO argues – the *ritvik* system memorialized by the July 9th Letter's '*henceforward*'. First TFO suggested that the longevity of the July 9th Letter instruction is proved by the reference to a *system of management* in the Will. Then it attempts to link the Codicil up to that faulty premise in order to bestow final authority on it – the authority of a document executed just nine days before His Divine Grace's departure. But the Codicil makes no reference to the "*system of management*" referred to in the Will. The Codicil refers to a Will of a different date than the one put into evidence by TFO. And even if the dates were the same and the Codicil did refer to a *system of management*, it would still be referring to a system put in place more than a month prior to the July 9th Letter.

In the Codicil, Srila Prabhupada states in closing (emphasis added):

"I therefore hereby extend, modify and alter my said Will dated 4th June, 1977, in the manner mentioned above. **In all other respects the said Will continues to hold good and shall always hold good.**"

From the standpoint of a "*system of management*" and any managerial activities mentioned in it, the Codicil deals with the very same sorts of concerns the Will does, i.e., with the disposition of tangible assets. There is absolutely nothing found in this Codicil that has even a remote reference to the process of initiations.

Despite all these facts, TFO continues to assert the faulty line of argument that the Will's *system of management* covers initiations, and therefore proves a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. Here is another of the angles TFO introduces:

"That the use of *ritviks* to give initiates' names was a **system of management** can be illustrated by the following:

In 1975 one of the preliminary GBC resolutions sanctioned that the 'GBC would have sole responsibility for managerial affairs'. " [WJ 2 p. 51]

TFO neglects to mention that the language in the **preliminary** 1975 GBC Resolutions, which *sanctioned* that the 'GBC would have sole responsibility for managerial affairs', was just that – **preliminary**. This sanction does not appear in the actual 1975 GBC Resolutions [\[17\]](#). "Preliminary" indicates just the opposite of "sanctioned". A thing is only *sanctioned* when it is firm, final, accepted – not when it is preliminary and then rejected. Yet we see that this misleading statement is underlined in TFO's text, emphasizing its importance.

TFO's next statement – "*Below are some of the 'managerial' issues the GBC dealt with that year*" – must be taken in light of its word jugglery: the 'managerial' issues the GBC dealt with that year were not issues they were dealing with as their 'sole responsibility', as the quote TFO lifted from the preliminary version of the 1975 Resolutions indicates. Obviously, they were dealing with managerial issues under Srila Prabhupada's direct oversight, **pointedly not at their own sole discretion**.

TFO presents two references from the 1975 GBC Resolutions, obviously hoping the reader will consider them as falling within the jurisdiction of a 'system of management' that the GBC men have 'sole responsibility' for and that somehow, this proves that matters dealing with initiations were part of the '*system of management*' Srila Prabhupada mentioned in his Will. And this, TFO attempts to cobble together with its standing assertion that the July 9th Letter instructs a system of post-samadhi *ritvik diksa* '*henceforward*'. Again, it is a **failed argument**.

In attempting to bridge Krishnakant's interpretation of the July 9th Letter over to his interpretation of the Will, TFO tries to bolster the notion that the system of initiations, which it says is synonymous with the '*system of management*' mentioned in the Will, is also the '*sole responsibility*' of the GBC. But in fact, that '*sole responsibility*' was only language used in a preliminary version of the 1975 GBC Resolutions, and was eliminated from the final Resolutions approved by Srila Prabhupada himself. So in the same way that Srila Prabhupada did not remove himself entirely from the process of initiations, he also did not turn managerial affairs regarding initiations solely over to the GBC.

TFO asserts that this reference to initiations is one of the 'managerial' issues the GBC dealt with that year. But in fact, it was Srila Prabhupada who was dealing with the issue – it was he who had established the requirements for first and second initiations, not the GBC. The only 'dealing' the GBC did on the matter was to memorialize Srila Prabhupada's mandate in the form of a GBC Resolution.

"These resolutions were *personally* approved by Srila Prabhupada. They demonstrate conclusively that the methodology for conducting initiations was deemed a **system of management**." [\[EL 10 p. 54\]](#)

Here TFO essentially suggests that Srila Prabhupada's *personal* approval of two 1975 GBC Resolutions somehow qualifies them as evidence that the Will's reference to a 'system of management' refers to and encompasses a post-samadhi system of initiations. It is a baseless conclusion. Srila Prabhupada has *personally approved* many Resolutions – that fact alone does

not imbue the Resolutions with abstract meaning that somehow connects them to some other document.

The Resolutions themselves **do not refer to the Will**, nor do they *demonstrate conclusively* anything about initiations being part of the management system mentioned in the Will. In fact, the only truly relevant aspect of Srila Prabhupada's *personal* approval as it relates to TFO's argument is the fact that Srila Prabhupada **did not** approve a Resolution giving 'sole responsibility for managerial affairs' to the GBC.

"Another instruction in Srila Prabhupada's will which indicates the intended longevity of the ritvik system, is where it states that the executive directors for his permanent properties in India could only be selected from amongst Srila Prabhupada's **initiated disciples**: [EL 11 p. 54]

"...a successor director or directors may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is my initiated disciple,..."
(Srila Prabhupada 's Declaration of Will, June 4th, 1977)"

This is something that could only occur if a *ritvik* system of initiation remained in place after Srila Prabhupada's departure, since otherwise the pool of potential directors would eventually dry up."

The notion that Srila Prabhupada could not instruct that executive directors who manage his India properties be his initiated disciples, unless there was some guarantee of a never-ending pool of initiated disciples to draw from, is a foolish proposition. The essence of the teachings of the Sampradaya, which are personified and represented by Srila Prabhupada, is that Lord Krsna is in control of everything. To fully realize this requires the followers to be sincere, pure and humble servants of the Lord, so they can recognize that Krsna is working on many different levels, such as Chaitya Guru. Pure devotees do not work in the way that the author of TFO is suggesting. They don't try to control the future by means of legal documents.

Nor does the law require that a document writer foresee every event that might happen in the long future, else all is lost. The law generally assumes that over the course of time, events are likely to unfold that writers of legal documents could not, or did not foresee or attempt to control. The law does not set out to penalize people or institutions for inadvertent errors of omission in legal documents when the intent is otherwise reasonably evident.

In the event that the last remaining Prabhupada disciple left his body, and there were no more to choose from in filling a vacant executive director position, it's not that Srila Prabhupada's society would automatically become defunct, and the society's assets would all be turned over to the government or the general public, simply because there was no living successor to fill a vacant director's role. In such a scenario, the surviving members of the society's management body could draw up a fresh agreement amongst themselves for how executive directors would be chosen in future. If a fight among the surviving members broke out, they could petition the court, present arguments as to the intent and desires of Srila Prabhupada and current

circumstances, and suggest what in their opinion is the most fair transfer of authority for the perpetuation of the society and ongoing management of its assets. They might petition the court to appoint a successor. The court would be expected to decide it, arriving at the most fair and logical remedy under law.

It is not that without a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system in place, ISKCON would grind to a halt years down the road, when the last available initiated disciple who could serve as director for a given temple property leaves his body. TFO's effort to bolt together the July 9th Letter and Srila Prabhupada's Will by contriving meanings that are clearly not present in either text, on the premise that Prabhupada intended this to ensure the long term future of initiations and a management system, is a theory with no basis in fact.

On one hand, TFO asserts that due to an absence of precise instruction in the Will regarding long-term succession and management of the named ISKCON properties (i.e., beyond the lifespan of Prabhupada's initiated disciples), the only obvious solution to ensure the perpetuation of the *management system* is to connect the Will to the July 9th Letter.


On the other hand, TFO asserts that the only way to ensure the long-term future of ISKCON itself is through a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. This conclusion leads to the notion that the July 9th '*henceforward*' must be married to a reference in the Will to a *system of management*, because the Will makes a statement about continuity without change.

Both efforts are built on contrived evidence and flawed logic.

Like any author of a Last Will and Testament, Srila Prabhupada was free to let time, circumstance and the law – what to speak of the Supreme Personality of Godhead – determine how institutional management would change hands in his society after all his direct disciples had departed from this world.

In summary, TFO has relied upon the Will and Codicil as proof that the July 9th Letter established a post-samadhi *ritvik* system, calling the November 5, 1977 Codicil an affirmation of the July 9th 'final order'. But in fact, the November 5th Codicil affirms that a Will dated June 4th, 1977 "*shall always hold good*", and that Will pre-dates the July 9th Letter by more than a month. Therefore, as the Codicil relates to a "final order", it actually affirms the circumstances in place **before** July 9th, not after it.

SUPPORTING AND SUBSEQUENT INSTRUCTIONS

In the section of TFO entitled 'The Evidence', the author has asserted his own opinion-based narrative account of events that led up to the July 9th Letter and events that followed Srila Prabhupada's departure. TFO provides a quote from Jayadvaita Swami, a quote from the *GII* handbook,  the text of the July 9th Letter itself, and under 'Supporting Instructions', what are

apparently three pieces of correspondence, two of which are not properly identified, the third being a letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta. TFO characterizes its 'supporting evidence' in this way:

"There were other statements made by Srila Prabhupada, and his secretary, in the days following the July 9th letter, which clearly indicate that the *ritvik* system was intended to continue without cessation: "

In fact, there are **no** statements found in any of the three pieces of support evidence which "*clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation*". Two of the items of evidence contradict TFO's stated policy:

"We shall base all our arguments solely on the philosophy and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada in his books, letters, lectures and conversations"

The letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta is apparently presented because it is believed to 'modify' the instructions contained in the July 9th Letter. Otherwise, it would contradict another of TFO's rules of evidence, since it qualifies in none of the other six categories of evidence TFO sets forth.

In fact, up to this section in TFO, **not a single piece of evidence from any of Srila Prabhupada's books, letters, lectures or conversations has yet been introduced.**

The issue of how evidence is presented in TFO is further discussed in an Appendix document entitled 'Construction of The Final Order'. [\[APX-4\]](#) This document deals with issues of structural integrity, which TFO lacks, and how arrangement serves to obfuscate TFO's intent as to how its evidence is to be comparatively weighed.

The July 31, 1977 Letter

"Make your own field and continue to become *ritvik* and act on my behalf." [\[EL 7 p. 35\]](#)

This phrase from Tamal Krishna's July 31, 1977 letter to Hansadutta can in no way, shape or form be construed as 'modifying', or otherwise supporting the Ritvik-vada conclusions about the July 9th Letter. The only thing it might be said to indicate is that Srila Prabhupada recognized that some 22 days after the July 9th Letter appointing Hansadutta as a *ritvik* representative, he had still not succeeded in complying with that instruction.

If one is instructed to 'act as a *ritvik* representative', and to begin (*henceforward*) accepting letters of recommendation sent to you by Temple Presidents, that obviously means start now. But according to Tamal Krishna in this letter, Srila Prabhupada is telling Hansadutta to "**continue to become** ritvik and act on my behalf". *Continue to become* means he has not **already** become, but that he must **continue trying** to become. He is **trying**, because he has not already **accomplished** it. And it follows that there is no guarantee he ever will.

Again, this letter from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda must be assumed to fall into TFO's category of evidence which 'modifies' the instructions contained in the July 9th Letter, because it does not qualify for any other category of evidence. But there is absolutely nothing in this letter that qualifies as 'modifying' the July 9th Letter instructions, or otherwise supporting the Ritvik-vada conclusion about the letter. It states (emphasis added):

"A letter has been sent to all the Temple Presidents and GBC [C 4 p. 18] which you should be receiving soon **describing the process for initiation to be followed in the future.** [AE 6 p. 36] Srila Prabhupada has appointed thus far eleven representatives who will initiate new devotees on His behalf. You can wait for this letter to arrive (the original has been sent to Ramesvara Maharaja for duplicating) and then all of the persons whom you recommened in your previous letters can be initiated." [AE 7 p. 36]

The phrase, "*to be followed in the future*" is the evidence TFO puts forward in support of its claims regarding '*henceforward*' and the alleged permanency of the July 9th Letter instructions. But '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter refers to an action on the part of the Temple Presidents, not on the part of the 11 *ritvik* representatives. The term '*henceforward*' is qualified by the auxiliary verb '*may*', giving a meaning that the Temple Presidents are being advised of an action that they may take. The meaning of '*may*' as a word describing an option is evident in a repeated use of the word, to say that *ritvik* representatives receiving letters of recommendation '*may*' accept the candidate, or not. '*Henceforward*' is not an instruction for the 11 *ritvik* representatives to carry out post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa initiations for all time (or until they themselves depart). And the July 9th Letter contains neither an instruction for termination or continuation, to be triggered by Srila Prabhupada's departure.

This phrase, "*to be followed in the future*", is not a statement from Srila Prabhupada, but a comment passed from one devotee to another. Even so, there is nothing to indicate that "*in the future*" means 'forever', or 'begin now and never stop'.

In fact, the letter from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda is evidence of nothing at all associated with the system for initiations, except that it refers to the issuance and pending distribution of the July 9th Letter. However, it does provide one other important piece of evidence, which the author of TFO likely didn't intend for the reader to notice. This statement:

"His Divine Grace has been maintaining His health on an even course and most amazingly has doubled His translation work keeping pace with the doubling of book distribution."

We call the reader's attention back to our earlier discussion of the July 7th Conversation, and the matter of the bottleneck that was created. Tamal Krishna indicates to Srila Prabhupada in that conversation that the reason his senior men stopped the initiations process already in place at the time was due to concerns for his health.

The July 19, 1977 Conversation

The third and final piece of evidence asserted in the "Supporting Instructions" section of TFO, albeit improperly cited, is this statement, apparently made during a July 19th Room Conversation:

- "...continue to become *ritvik* and act on my charge." (July 19th)

Again, no statements found in this passage of conversation "*clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation*".

There are some interesting anomalies associated with this conversation. The first is that the excerpt of the July 19th Conversation is included twice in TFO's Appendices. There is no comment from the author pointing this out or explaining the reason for it, thus the reader would tend to think it was simply an error of duplication. But when we compare the two examples, we see that they are different from one another – significantly different.

Among the many differences found when comparing the two items is the wording of headers, the typography, punctuation and capitalization – all of which makes it difficult for the eye to notice that the items are duplicated. There is also significantly different wording in the two quoted excerpts, the most critical of which is (emphasis added):

"Make your own field and continue to **become *ritvik*** and act on my charge."

"Make your own field and continue to **be *ritvik*** and act on my charge."

TFO's own criteria for evidence states that:

"we shall be presenting as evidence signed documentation, issued personally by Srila Prabhupada, and conversation transcripts, all of which are accepted as authentic by the GBC."

In both the Folio 2.0 (1990) and the Vedabase 4.11 (1998) the text states (emphasis added):

"Make your own field and continue to **become *rttvik*** and act on my charge."

So in fact, the BBT authorized version (the version *accepted as authentic by the GBC*) of this statement **does not** match either of the versions presented in TFO. There is a difference in the spelling of the word "rttvik", which is given in italics as "*ritvik*" in both TFO quotations. But most importantly, the alternate TFO version changes "**become *ritvik***" to "**be *ritvik***" – and that is a very significant difference, as we have demonstrated above in our analysis of the July 31, 1977 letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta.

Given that the crux of the Ritvik-vada argument, based on the July 9th Letter, hinges on the time factor represented by *henceforward*' and allegations of Srila Prabhupada's intent for it to be

upheld in perpetuity, the difference between "**be *ritvik***" and "**become *ritvik***" is very significant indeed.

TFO puts forward several lines of argument that draw upon 'supporting evidence':

"a handful of (at the time) unpublished personal letters, sent only to individuals who were desiring to become diksa gurus even in Srila Prabhupada's presence".

These arguments are secondary to TFO's main thesis, and for the sake of brevity are not included here. (See the 'Alternatives' section of *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*)

In concluding its presentation on evidence that might support an alternative to the *ritvik* system, TFO states:

"Furthermore, Srila Prabhupada's books and conversations only contain instructions for his disciples to be *siksa* gurus. Though the general *principle* of a disciple becoming a *diksa* guru is mentioned, Srila Prabhupada does not specifically order his disciples to initiate and take their own disciples."

Taken in the singular, this statement is incorrect, as evidenced by the letter to Tusta Krsna. Although Srila Prabhupada didn't say, 'right now, begin initiating and taking disciples', he did say, **in his [Prabhupada's] absence or disappearance you can accept disciples without any limitation**. This is not a statement about *siksa*, and it is more than simply a statement about the *general principle* of giving *diksa*. The letter to Tusta Krsna must be considered in context of the argument as to whether or not there could be *diksa* gurus to perpetuate the growth of the movement after Prabhupada's departure, thus demonstrating an alternative to the post-samadhi *ritvik* *diksa* theory being proposed.

In the 'Additional Evidence' section of DOR, we address two relevant items included under TFO's Appendices, again, put forward as evidence in support of the post-samadhi *ritvik* conclusion:

Letter From Ramesvara, July 21 1977

Among the most pertinent aspects of this letter are the following statements:

"...am enclosing herein ... 2) Srila Prabhupada's initial list of disciples appointed to perform initiations for His Divine Grace."

Ramesvara has referred not to *officiating acarya(s)* or *ritvik acarya(s)*, or even to *ritvik representatives*, but simply to *disciples* with an appointed task.

Ramesvara confirms that Srila Prabhupada is continuing full force with his writing work. Not surprising, then, that in both his July 7th and July 9th communications, Prabhupada included himself as an active participant in the initiations process:

"From Tamal's letter it seems that Srila Prabhupada is enthusiastic despite poor health, and is translating full force."

Pyramid House Confessions, December 3rd 1980

Notably, in his 1980 disclosure, Tamal Krishna uses the term *officiating priests*, acknowledges they'll initiate on Prabhupada's behalf, and that they are not serving as guru.

Overall, Tamal Krishna comes to the same conclusion we do: Srila Prabhupada appointed assistants, not gurus, although he expected his qualified disciples to become gurus themselves. One becomes a diksa guru by qualification, not by appointment. Srila Prabhupada demonstrated this in his ISKCON, doing exactly what his Spiritual Master had done before him. He did not appoint a successor acarya, or a succession of initiating diksas to take over initiations after his departure.

Srila Prabhupada's October 18, 1977 Conversation

There is one more key piece of 'subsequent evidence', which the author of TFO chose not to call to the reader's attention – the comments made by Srila Prabhupada in a room conversation on October 18, 1977 in Vrindavan [\[14\]](#) (emphasis added):

Prabhupada: Hare Krsna. One Bengali gentleman has come from New York?

Tamala Krsna: Yes. Mr. Sukamal Roy Chowdury.

Prabhupada: So I have deputed some of you to initiate. Hm?

Tamala Krsna: Yes. Actually... Yes, Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhupada: So I think Jayapataka can do that if he likes. I have already deputed. Tell him.

Tamala Krsna: Yes.

Prabhupada: So, deputies, Jayapataka's name was there?

Bhagavan: It is already on there, Srila Prabhupada. His name was on that list.

Prabhupada: So I depute him to do this at Mayapura, and you may go with him. I stop for the time being. Is that all right?

Tamala Krsna: Stopped doing what, Srila Prabhupada?

Prabhupada: This initiation. I have deputed the, my disciples. Is it clear or not?

Giriraja: It's clear.

Prabhupada: You have got the list of the names?

Tamala Krsna: Yes, Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhupada: And if by Krsna's grace I recover from this condition, then I shall begin again, or I may not be pressed in this condition to initiate. It is not good.

This conversation took place more than three months after the July 9th Letter was released, and almost a month prior to His Divine Grace's departure. Here, Srila Prabhupada is clearly stating that if by Krsna's arrangement his health recovers, he will **begin again to initiate**. TFO's claim that Srila Prabhupada established a system for *ritvik* diksa initiations in which he would no longer participate, and would have no recourse in, is entirely contradicted by this conversation.

MAY 28th CONVERSATION

Under the heading Objection #6, TFO introduces the subject of the May 28th Conversation:

"6) 'Does not the 'Appointment Tape' contain relevant information that clearly frames the July 9th order as being only applicable whilst Srila Prabhupada was physically present on the planet?'"

This is the first mention in TFO thus far of Srila Prabhupada's May 28th Conversation, which is referred to as the 'Appointment Tape'. Given that the May 28th Conversation and the July 7th Conversation are commonly referred to in TFO as primary evidence in support of the author's interpretation of the July 9th Letter, it's interesting to note how far along TFO's arguments have proceeded before it introduces this conversation. And up to this point in TFO, the July 7th Conversation has been mentioned only in reference to names being sent to Srila Prabhupada for his book, along with the quote, "*wherever you consider it is right*".

As noted above, TFO's approach to the May 28th Conversation is that the author is addressing it because the GBC assert it as evidence in their *GII* handbook. [1] TFO does not accept that the conversation 'modifies' the July 9th Letter, and says it is not vital to an understanding of the letter. We agree with TFO's statement that the May 28th Conversation doesn't modify the July 9th Letter, and it "*has nothing in it to contradict the final order*."

Shortly after publication of TFO, Krishnakant repudiated entirely the May 28th Conversation, [19] on the basis of a forensic audio investigation of a copy of the conversation tape, which reportedly concluded the tape may have been tampered with. [27] Thus, TFO proclaimed that the May 28th Conversation cannot be used as evidence, in any way, in the ISKCON *guru-tattva* debate.

Although TFO author Krishnakant has repudiated the May 28th Conversation as evidence, he nonetheless relies upon it to validate his fundamental position. [C 8 p. 109, C 9-10 p. 118] Without the 'bridge' TFO builds from the May 28th mention of *ritvik* *acarya(s)*, over to the *ritvik* *representatives* mentioned in the July 9th Letter, its entire position is left hanging on the tenuous one-word hook, *henceforward*.

TFO says that Srila Prabhupada would not issue important instructions to the Movement by "releasing incomplete and misleading written directives which could only be properly understood by rummaging through old taped conversations", and:

"When one considers the magnitude of the order in question, namely the continuation of the Sankirtan mission for up to ten thousand years, [EF 36 p. 107] and what happened to the Gaudiya Math over precisely this issue, it seems inconceivable that Srila Prabhupada would have managed things in this way. However this is what we must believe if we are to accept the present GBC position."

The July 9th Letter says absolutely nothing about post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa, let alone for *up to ten thousand years*. More importantly, TFO makes a serious philosophical error in characterizing how Srila Prabhupada would manage things in comparison to the Gaudiya Matha situation. [PE 1 p. 11] (More on this below in the section, '[Srila Prabhupada followed Srila Bhaktisiddhanta](#)')

A significant portion of *The Final Order* is dedicated to discussing the May 28th Conversation, and likewise, it is dealt with in great detail in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*. There are so many important points to be considered when making a thorough study of the May 28th Conversation and the arguments TFO asserts based upon it, that we find it difficult to present the material in an abridged format. The full analysis and commentary in DOR and appended documents must be read in order to get a comprehensive understanding of our analysis and conclusions.

In brief terms, TFO has considered four 'official versions' of the May 28th transcript in its presentation, although it neglects to give proper citations and copies of source documents. In DOR, we offer a deconstruction of the conversation that reflects the four versions TFO combined into one, along with four additional extant transcripts. These are presented in a side-by-side comparative view, for easy reference. [APX-6] One of the eight transcripts is our own transcribed version of the audio tape. [APX-7c]

In the full length version of *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*, we have employed a system of numerical icons – ①a) to ⑥i) – which correlate to the most significant points made in our 'Comparative Review of the May 28th Conversation Transcripts'. [APX-5] The reader is encouraged to study all these points carefully in the context of the 'Comparative Review', which is a complete and very detailed analysis of the May 28th Conversation.

The 'Comparative Review' includes Grammar & Syntax charts for 13 key lines of dialogue in the May 28th Conversation. As theses charts and the attendant commentary illustrate, TFO makes a number of significant errors with respect to grammatical tense and person. Likewise, it makes several incorrect assumptions based on faulty interpretation of tense and person. Please refer to the 'Comparative Review' text and icons: [Line 6, ④(c); Line 9; Line 10; Line 11 ④(e); Line 12 ④(f)].

Following is an abbreviated version of some of the key points made in DOR, in response to TFO's commentary on the May 28th Conversation.

"Lines 1-3: Here Satsvarupa dasa Goswami asks Srila Prabhupada a specific question regarding how initiations will run in the future - 'particularly at that time when you are no longer with us'. Whatever answer Srila Prabhupada gives we know it will be particularly relevant to after his departure, since that is the time frame Satsvarupa is clearly concerned with, i.e. - '**when you are no longer with us**'."

The conversation begins with a clear question on future initiations, after Srila Prabhupada is no longer physically present. TFO doesn't analyze the anomalous statements Satsvarupa later interjected into the conversation, which caused Srila Prabhupada to shift a portion of his remarks from future tense to present tense. Instead, TFO incorrectly characterizes the dialogue and uses the change in tense to bolster its argument. ['Comparative Review' (CR) Lines 7 & 8, and key points **2 (a-d)**, **5 b-c**, and **6 (a-d)**]

"Lines 4-7: Here Srila Prabhupada answers Satsvarupa dasa Goswami's question. He says he will be appointing some disciples to act as '*officiating acarya*', or '*ritviks*'.
[EF 37 p. 116]

In fact, as the various transcripts show, Srila Prabhupada said he will recommend '*officiating acarya(s)*', in response to which Tamal Krishna asked for clarification – *Is that called ritvik acarya?* To which Prabhupada said answered, *ritvik. Yes.* He does not answer, "*Ritviks... but only ritviks.... not acaryas, just ritvik representatives*", although he certainly could have made that distinction if he'd wished to. Instead, he simply affirms the adjective portion of Tamal Krishna's query, *ritvik*.

TFO does not point out the plural variation, *acaryas*, nor does the author acknowledge that Srila Prabhupada was affirming "Yes" to "*ritvik acarya*" – he was not saying just "*ritvik*". By ignoring the use of the word "*acarya*", the author no doubt hopes to take the focus off the difference between the '*officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*' mentioned in the May 28th Conversation, and the '*ritvik representatives of the acarya*' mentioned in the July 9th Letter. As the conversation progresses, we see that the *ritvik acarya* is actually a diksa guru, initiating his own disciples – Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples. The '*ritvik representative of the acarya*', however, is simply assisting Prabhupada with initiations **while** he is present and involved.

[Throughout DOR, our repeated use of "*officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*" is meant to indicate that in the various May 28th transcripts, *officiating acarya* is sometimes shown as singular, sometimes plural. Therefore, Srila Prabhupada's affirmation, "*ritvik. Yes*", is reflected by the tandem term, with plural alternative, as a reminder that *ritvik* was specifically used to describe *acarya(s)* – not as a standalone term.]

"Lines 8-9: Here Satsvarupa dasa Goswami asks what relationship the **initiator** has with the person being initiated. Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami does not quite finish his question when Srila Prabhupada immediately answers '**he is guru**'. Since *ritviks*, by definition, are

not the **initiators**, [AE 15 p. 118] Srila Prabhupada can only have been referring to himself as the '**guru**' of those being initiated. This is confirmed in the July 9th letter where it states three times that those being initiated were to be the disciples of Srila Prabhupada." [C 8 p. 109, C 9-10 p. 118]

We have clearly demonstrated in our 'Comparative Review' [APX-5], from the standpoints of content, syntax and grammar, that Srila Prabhupada is **NOT** referring to himself when he says, "*He's guru*". [CR Lines 5 to 8, ④ (b-d) and ② (b-c)]

Here TFO makes an error of assumption, building upon the earlier error in thinking, described above. The author has ignored the variable plurality of *acarya(s)* noted in various transcripts; he has ignored Srila Prabhupada's use of the word (*officiating*) *acarya(s)*; and he has taken Prabhupada's answer to Tamal Krishna's qualifying question, *Is that called ritvik acarya?*, to which he replied, *ritvik. Yes*, as evidence in favor of the idea of *ritvik* (representative) – not *ritvik acarya*. But the word *ritvik* is used in the May 28th Conversation to describe a type of *acarya* – (*officiating*) *acarya(s)*/*ritvik acarya(s)* – not to describe a *ritvik* representative of **the** *acarya*. TFO's author repeatedly obfuscates this fact, for obvious reasons.

TFO extends this logic forward to the July 9th Letter, making the erroneous assumption that (*officiating*) *acarya(s)*/*ritvik acarya(s)* is one and the same as *ritvik representatives* of **the** *acarya*. Built upon this flawed line of reasoning is TFO's equally flawed conclusion that "*ritviks, by definition, are not the initiators*", and therefore "*Prabhupada can only have been referring to himself as the 'guru'*" when he said, "*He's guru*".

TFO concludes, "*This is confirmed in the July 9th letter where it states three times that those being initiated were to be the disciples of Srila Prabhupada.*" But it is said only two times, not three [EF 18 p. 63]. TFO ignores the fact that in the May 28th Conversation, when Srila Prabhupada referred to the (*officiating*) *acarya(s)*/*ritvik acarya(s)* that he would recommend sometime in future, he was **specifically** referring to initiations after his departure. These *ritvik acaryas* are described as diksa gurus, initiating their own disciples – Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples.

There is no evidence that Srila Prabhupada recommended or authorized any (*officiating*) *acarya(s)*/*ritvik acarya(s)*. The July 9th Letter named 11 *ritvik representatives* of **the** *acarya* – not that it authorized anyone to be diksa initiating *ritvik acaryas* themselves.

Again, while TFO has repudiated the May 28th Conversation as evidence [C 8 p. 108, C 9-10 p. 118], it uses the conversation to bolster its claims about the July 9th Letter. In this case, TFO's claim that three times the letter says those being initiated were to be the disciples of Srila Prabhupada, is being vetted against the May 28th Conversation.

"Sometimes the curious theory is put forward that when Srila Prabhupada says '**he is guru**', he is really talking about the *ritviks* themselves. This is quite bizarre since Srila Prabhupada has only just defined the word *ritvik* as 'officiating acarya'- literally a priest who conducts some type of religious or ceremonial function. [EF 38 p. 119] In the July

9th letter Srila Prabhupada clarifies precisely what ceremonial function these priests will conduct. [EF 39 p. 119] They were supposed to give spiritual names to new initiates, and in the case of second initiation, chant on their *gayatri* thread - all on Srila Prabhupada's behalf. That was it. There is no mention of them being *diksa* gurus, initiating their own disciples or being Spiritual Masters on their own behalf." [EF 40 p. 119]

TFO states that Srila Prabhupada has just defined the work *ritvik* as being, literally, "*a priest who conducts some type of religious or ceremonial function*", but **he has done no such thing**. It is TFO's author who has attributed this definition to the term. Prabhupada has used the term *officiating acarya(s)* as synonymous with *ritvik acarya*. Nothing more.

TFO states that "*In the July 9th letter Srila Prabhupada clarifies precisely what ceremonial function these priests will conduct.*" But that is also not a fact. The July 9th Letter does not refer to "these priests". The July 9th Letter refers to "*ritvik*" - *representatives of the acarya*. And a representative of the acarya is not the same thing as the Acarya himself.

TFO goes on to say that there is no mention of them "*being diksa gurus, initiating their own disciples*", but that is also incorrect. The *them* being spoken about here are the same persons Srila Prabhupada has just referred to as the *officiating/ acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who will conduct *diksa* initiations after his departure. Srila Prabhupada made it very clear that on his order, they will be making their own disciples:

Tamal Krsna: No. He is asking that these *ritvik* acaryas, they are officiating, giving *diksa*, (there)... the people who they give *diksa* to, whose disciples are they?

Prabhupada: They are his disciples.

[]

Prabhupada: When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. (That's it). (Just see).

Of course, that part of the dialogue comes later in the conversation, and TFO would prefer to have you stop as soon as the term "*ritvik*" (without '*acarya*') has been uttered.

"The letter specifically defines *ritvik* as 'representative of the acarya'. They were to act on behalf of the *acarya*, not as *acaryas* in their own right. This being the case why would Srila Prabhupada cloud the issue by calling the *ritviks* 'guru'? If they were initiating gurus all along, why not just call them that to save confusion?"

Finally, TFO acknowledges what has been obvious all along: The July 9th Letters refers to *ritvik* representatives of the acarya – not to *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. Unfortunately, the author does not take this golden opportunity to reverse the course of his flawed logic.

The fact of the matter is that the 11 personalities named in the July 9th Letter were authorized to be *ritvik* representatives of the acarya, nothing more. Not acaryas themselves... not acaryas of any type. Simply representatives of **the** acarya.

The personalities that Srila Prabhupada referred to at the start of the May 28th Conversation were not called 'representatives of the acarya'. They were called *officiating/ acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*, who would be initiating diksa gurus. Srila Prabhupada stated that at some point in the future, after some unspecified event had taken place, he would authorize actual acaryas:

"After this is settled up I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acarya(s)."

Representatives of the acarya and the acarya himself are simply not one and the same thing. There is no evidence to show that Srila Prabhupada ever recommended any acaryas. He went no further than to name 11 *ritvik* **representatives** of **the acarya**, deputed to help streamline the process initiation which had become log-jammed because they had *stopped* operation of the system already in place, then came to Prabhupada for help in solving the bottleneck problem that resulted.

What Srila Prabhupada was thinking when he said "*ritvik. Yes*", we cannot know. This was the **first** instance when the term was used in the context of initiations. In his Bhagavatam lectures, Srila Prabhupada had only previously used the term, or derivations of the term, in contexts that had nothing to do with initiation. In the case of the May 28th Conversation, we can only assume that Srila Prabhupada was agreeable that, at least for the purpose of this conversational exchange, "*ritvik*" could be used like "officiating" in this context. Whether he would have used the word that way in one of his Bhaktivedanta purports is not for us to say.

We do know that up to this time, no definition had ever been given by Srila Prabhupada for *ritvik* as an officiating initiator... neither diksa, nor siksa, nor otherwise. Nor had Srila Prabhupada ever defined '*acarya*' by comparing or equating it to '*ritvik officiating priest*'. There is no other indication that '*ritvik*' is synonymous with '*acarya*'.

"If **lines 11-13** do establish **modification a)**, this will only be at the expense of contradicting **lines 1-7** where Srila Prabhupada has already clearly answered that *ritviks* were to be appointed 'particularly' for after his departure."

While TFO's argument is directed primarily at the GBC, against their *GII* **1** and so-called Modifications **a)** and **b)**, the disclosure made here is fully applicable in the context of DOR's challenge. **TFO's author clearly admits that *ritviks* were to be appointed 'particularly' for after Srila Prabhupada's departure.** More specifically, it is *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who were to be appointed, not just *ritvik* representatives of the Acarya. Nonetheless, the author admits that the *ritviks* were those who would be appointed 'particularly' for a role post-samadhi. This contradicts TFO's conclusion that those very same persons are the ones named in the July 9th Letter (the 11 *ritvik* **representatives** of **the** Acarya).

Nowhere in the July 9th Letter does it say that these *ritvik* representatives will continue to serve as representatives in their specifically deputed role after Srila Prabhupada accepts maha-samadhi.

Rather, the July 9th system is designed with Srila Prabhupada as a direct participant. Should he become unavailable to participate, then in the absence of any stated mechanism for continuity, the ordered system would stop functioning, i.e., the principle of *impossibility of performance* (described below) would come into play.

Nor does the term '*henceforward*' specifically refer to an act on the part of these 11 *ritvik* representatives. '*Henceforward*' refers to an optional act on the part of the Temple Presidents, who may now send recommendations to the *ritvik* closest to them. Not that they **shall**, or they **will**, or they **must** do so, but that they **may** do so. This Letter followed by just two days the July 7th Conversation in which the bottleneck problem was presented, and Srila Prabhupada suggested various ways of streamlining the process. In the July 9th Letter, he refers to one such adjustment – Temple Presidents may now send recommendations to a *ritvik* representative. The July 9th Letter does not say "only send to these *ritviks*, do not any longer send directly to Srila Prabhupada".

While TFO argues that the May 28th Conversation, the July 7th Conversation and the July 9th Letter all specifically deal with Srila Prabhupada's plans for a system of initiations for after his departure, in fact not one of them does so. In the July 7th Conversation, Srila Prabhupada specifically indicates he will be a participant ("*India, I am here*"), and the July 9th Letter specifies that *ritvik* representatives shall send the names of new initiates to Srila Prabhupada for inclusion in his book. Nowhere is there an instruction for a post-samadhi system. **This is the great fallacy of Ritvik-vada and The Final Order.**

In the May 28th Conversation, Srila Prabhupada said he would, after some time, be recommending *officiating acaryas*. Just 42 days later, during the July 7th Conversation when Prabhupada was listing names of devotees who could assist with initiations on his behalf, he never referred to them as *officiating acaryas*, or *ritvik acaryas*, or even as representatives of the Acarya. He simply referred to them as 'sannyasis' and 'men'. He did not reiterate the earlier statement of May 28th, indicating that these men were one and the same as the *acarya(s)* he would be recommending sometime in future. Rather, he named the men in the context of a specific discussion, about the bottleneck problem and the solution for it.

And as we've pointed out, when Srila Prabhupada said, "*After this is settled up I shall recommend some of you*", we can't say with certainty what *this* refers to. After *this* what? For all we know, it could mean 'After *this* lila pastime ends, I will recommend some of you to Krsna.' There was no promise or specific commitment assigned to the statement.

"However what Srila Prabhupada does not say is that this 'acting on his behalf' must cease once he leaves the planet. He also does not say that 'acting on his behalf' can *only* happen whilst he is present. Indeed nowhere thus far has he directly linked his physical presence in any way with the concept of acting on his behalf, but rather simply states it as a reason that prevents his disciples from being guru, and it is this 'not being guru' which is linked to acting as a *ritvik*."

Srila Prabhupada does not specifically say that acting on his behalf during his presence "must cease". Rather, he makes explicit mention of how initiations will be carried out after his departure: by *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* he will recommend to give diksa after his departure. This is the opening message given in the May 28th Conversation.

Srila Prabhupada never said that once the system instructed in the July 9th Letter had begun, the system operating prior to that time would still be an optional system to follow. He gave no indication that two systems could or should run as parallel tracks. Likewise, he did not say the July 9th system should continue after his departure. Nor did he specifically say that so many things should stop when he departs: '*Please stop calling me on the telephone*'. In other words, it is not required that one elocute all the things that should stop or change when a significant event occurs that will naturally stop or change them.

"There is certainly nothing on **lines 11-13** which in any way modifies Srila Prabhupada's clear reply to Satsvarupa's original question - (**lines 1-7**) Thus our understanding of **lines 1-7** remains intact. Srila Prabhupada did not contradict himself, the July 9th order stands so far unmodified"

This underscores TFO strategic logic. By ignoring the fact that Srila Prabhupada initially referred to *appointing officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*, instead emphasizing his affirmative reply to Tamal's request for confirmation with just *ritvik*, TFO repeatedly asserts the notion that the May 28th term *ritvik* refers to, and is synonymous with, the *ritvik representative(s) of the acarya* mentioned in the July 9th Letter. But **that is false**. Every instance where such a statement or insinuation is made throughout TFO, **it is false**.

"What **lines 11-13** do establish is that the *ritvik* system was to operate whilst Srila Prabhupada was still present., [EF 41 p. 125] but not that it can *only* operate whilst he is present. The July 9th letter makes this clear anyway by the use of the word 'henceforward'. [EL 27 p. 125] The word 'henceforward' encompasses all time frames from that day onwards, regardless of Srila Prabhupada's physical proximity. [UC 19 p. 125] *Let us read on:*"

It is not a "*ritvik* system" that is established in these lines of the May 28th Conversation – or anywhere in the conversation. The so-called *ritvik* system was established by the July 9th Letter, which appointed 11 *ritvik* representatives of the acarya, to operate within a system of initiation that involved Srila Prabhupada's presence. **That** is the "*ritvik* system". The system of initiations that existed prior to the May 28th Conversation had never been called a "*ritvik* system". And references in the May 28th Conversation to *ritvik(s)* were specifically referring to *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who would be recommended sometime in future, and would conduct diksa initiations after Srila Prabhupada's departure, making their own disciples – Prabhupada's grand-disciples.

Not only is TFO's statement above predicated upon error [EF 41 p. 125], it also contains flawed logic. As repeatedly noted, the word '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter refers specifically to actions on the part of the Temple Presidents – an optional action that they **may** take.

'Henceforward' does not establish a *ritvik* system involving *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*, does not indicate that such a system exists.

"**Lines 14-15:** Interestingly at this point Satsvarupa dasa Goswami asks a question in the first person: [EF 42 p. 126] 'So then they'll also be considered your disciples?'"

As indicated in the Grammar & Syntax chart from our 'Comparative Review' [APX-5], Line 9 [see also 2(e)], Satsvarupa is not speaking in first person, as TFO says. The question posed to Srila Prabhupada by Satsvarupa was in a mixed tense of third and second person, and Prabhupada answered in third person.

"Srila Prabhupada answers 'Yes, they are disciples...' Once more confirming the ownership of any future disciples. [AE 16 p. 126] Although it is not clear what Srila Prabhupada is going on to say, his initial answer is quite definite. He is asked a direct question, in the first person, [EF 42 p. 126] and he answers 'Yes'."

One cannot assume that based on this fragmentary statement, the ownership of future disciples is "confirmed". As noted in our detailed analysis, Satsvarupa has improperly inserted this question into the conversation. [CR Line 9 2(e)] Srila Prabhupada begins to give a conditional answer, *Yes, they are disciples (but) (why) consider ... who*. The sentence is fragmentary because it is not completed. The object of the conditional word(s) – 'but/why' – is 'who', and the sentence ends without telling us what it is about that statement, 'Yes, they are disciples', that is conditional on something. Again, we have provided a detailed analysis of this portion of the exchange. [CR Line 10]

Mixing references to the real, factual *ritviks* together with TFO's falsified representation of *ritviks* (as the *ritvik representatives of the acarya*); dropping the *acarya* designation; pretending that the diksa disciples being talked about belong to Srila Prabhupada because they were initiated by the *ritvik representatives of the acarya*, rather than by the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada actually refers to, the author of TFO continues on with what is **an utterly contrived and failed argument**.

"**Lines 19-20:** Tamal Krsna Goswami repeats the answer, and then Srila Prabhupada continues; 'who is initiating ... his grand-disciple.' We have chosen the transcript version 'his grand-disciple' over the version 'he is grand-disciple' since it most closely resembles the tape, and seems to flow best with the sense of the conversation. (Otherwise the person initiating would simultaneously become a grand-disciple! - 'who is initiating ... he is grand-disciple.')"

We have given a very detailed analysis of this part of the conversation: [C.R. Line 12 and p(f) therein, and Line 14 complete]. We argue that *who is initiating* refers to Srila Prabhupada's previous emphatic statement, *They are his disciples*. And that the second part of the phrase is an independent clause, *he is grand-disciple*, referring to the disciple and his status as a grand-disciple of Srila Prabhupada's.

Obviously, the person initiating would not also be grand-disciple. In fact, the generational term *grand* makes the message's content very clear. *He* (the disciple) is *grand-disciple*. Grand-disciple is generational... grand means two steps removed. Who is two steps above the grand-disciple? Srila Prabhupada. Again, the initiator being referred to is **NOT** Srila Prabhupada, as we have clearly shown – it is the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* that are the primary subject of the discussion. They are initiating, after Prabhupada's departure (upon his recommendation), and their disciples will be grand-disciples of Srila Prabhupada.

Tamal Krishna's question was very clear: "*these ritvik acaryas* [who you'll recommend to give initiations after you're no longer with us], *they're officiating, giving diksa, their... the people who they give diksa to, whose disciples are they?*"

If Srila Prabhupada was still referring to initiations while he was present – formalities, on his behalf – he would have said *They are my disciples*. But the question clearly, unarguably referred to post-samadhi initiations, and the answer likewise referred to post-samadhi initiations. There is nothing in either the syntax, grammar or context to support the notion that Prabhupada said *his* in place of *my*.

They [plural subject pronoun, third person] *are his* [singular possessive pronoun, third person] *disciples*.

There is no way to turn the third person **his** into a first person statement. Furthermore, as the audio indicates, Srila Prabhupada added emphasis to his answer, saying *They are his disciples*.

"Given the premise that *ritviks* are only officiating, and that their role is only representational, it should be self-evident to the reader that this interpretation of **lines 17-20** is nonsense. It is a contradiction in terms for a *ritvik* to have their own disciples, what to speak of grand-disciples."

Again, TFO presses forward its wholly flawed argument: **[AE 16 p. 126] [EL 26 p. 125] [WJ 9 p. 128]**

"There appears to be just two possible options for interpretation in considering this conversation:

1) Future new disciples were to belong to *ritvik* priests, who by definition are not *diksa* gurus, but officiators who have been set up specifically to act as proxies.

2) Future new disciples were to belong to the *diksa* guru, Srila Prabhupada.

Option 1) is just absurd. Therefore we have gone for option 2) as the only rational choice, and have thus interpreted the tape accordingly."

TFO completely ignores the obvious third option, which is the true and right one:

The *ritviks* being spoken of on May 28th, who would be initiating diksa disciples after Prabhupada's departure – disciples who will be Prabhupada's grand-disciples – those *ritviks* are **NOT** the *ritvik representatives of the acarya* – they are the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada has been referring to throughout this May 28th Conversation. They are **acaryas**, they are **diksa gurus**, they are taking **their own disciples**, their disciples will be **Prabhupada's grand-disciples** – and although Prabhupada said he would recommend them sometime in the future, he never did so. Instead, 42 days later when he solved the bottleneck problem presented on July 7th, Srila Prabhupada named 11 *ritvik representatives of the acarya* – they are **not** acaryas; they are **not** diksa gurus; they are **not** taking their own disciples. They are **not** *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*.

"A great deal is made of the use of the term 'grand-disciple'. For many, the use of this phrase by Srila Prabhupada acts as a clincher, since you can only have grand-disciples if there are *diksa gurus*. **This is true**. Unfortunately the words following the term 'his grand-disciple' are usually ignored. Srila Prabhupada goes on to state that a grand-disciple and hence a *diksa guru* will only exist when Srila Prabhupada orders his disciple to become a *diksa guru*. *In other words Srila Prabhupada is simply saying that when a guru orders his disciple to become a diksa guru, he will have grand-disciples ('his grand-disciple'), since the new diksa guru will then be initiating in his own right ('he becomes disciple of my disciple')."*

Again, because TFO's author is primarily aiming his arguments at the GBC, he is asserting arguments that will not hold up in a different challenge environment, like DOR's. Yes, it is true that you must have a diksa guru in order to have grand-disciples. We are pleased to see TFO's admission that **this is true** (emphasis added above). Because we are not speaking on behalf of the ISKCON GBC and we are not advocating on behalf of either a Zonal Acarya system or an institutional diksa program, we have no difficulty at all in paying attention to the words following *his grand-disciple*:

"When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. (That's it). (Just see)."

Precisely! When the Acarya orders, his disciples may become regular diksa gurus. The regular guru's disciples become Srila Prabhupada's grand-disciples... *disciple of my disciple. That's it.*

We have no qualms about the fact that Srila Prabhupada never, during his manifest lila, recommended, named or authorized disciples to be *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. **When** he might have intended to do that, having mentioned in the May 28th Conversation that it would be sometime **after this is settled up** – that we don't know. Perhaps he changed his mind. Perhaps what he had hoped to settle up never got settled. We can only speculate. What we do know is that no such order or authorization exists.

TFO's Ritvik-vada position, which is primarily arguing against the GBC, takes liberties with the knowledge that only certain lines of argument and defense would be likely come from the

ISKCON leaders who, after a history of Zonal Acarya-ism, re-wrote ISKCON *guru-tattva* to support an institutional Diksa Guru program. The GBC has never been able to philosophically defend that program, and in fact, it is every bit as asiddhantic as Ritvik-vada. But we are not encumbered by the weight of these constructs in making our arguments. There is no institutional imperative to have an easy, immediate solution available for initiations – what we call 'diksa on-demand'.

"In other words Srila Prabhupada is simply saying that when a guru orders his disciple to become a diksa guru, he will have grand-disciples ('his grand-disciple'), since the new diksa guru will then be initiating in his own right ('he becomes disciple of my disciple')."

Although TFO's author has clearly stated the truth, right here, he has been unwilling to live by it. Instead, he has consistently ignored the May 28th term *acarya*, constantly inserting into TFO's arguments the May 28th term *ritvik*, as if it were one and same as the *ritvik representatives of the acarya* named in the July 9th Letter. But clearly, that is not the case.

And what is this incalcitrant unwillingness on the part of TFO's author borne of? What do we make of the grudging unwillingness on the part of so many Ritvik devotees today, who refuse to accept the obvious? We have written much on that subject in the past, and will not digress into the discussion here. Suffice to say, the roots of asiddhantic Ritvik-vada **do** have a source: that source can be traced in a logical, unsentimental fashion. And in fact, it can be remediated in amazingly short order, if one is only willing to adjust their thinking.

TFO states:

"In actuality the May 28th conversation is not ordering any specific person to do anything at all."

Correct!

"Srila Prabhupada is simply making known his intention to appoint *ritviks* at some point in the future."

No! He is making known his intention to appoint *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. He is **not** making known his intention to appoint 11 *ritvik representatives of the acarya*.

"He then goes on to answer slightly muddled questions about guru-disciple relationships within the *ritvik* system. He then concludes with a statement about what would happen should he ever decide to give the relevant **order** to someone to become a *diksa* guru."

Correct.

"It is clear though that the specific order naming specific people to perform specific functions was first made on July 7th (*please see Appendices*), and then confirmed in the signed letter of July 9th."

Correct.

"But as can be seen from reading the July 9th letter, there is no mention whatsoever of the eleven appointed *ritviks* ever becoming *diksa* gurus; or for the *ritvik* system to ever stop."

Correct! The July 9th Letter names 11 *ritvik representatives* of **the** acarya. These representatives were not being authorized on July 9th to be *diksa* gurus. They were authorized to serve as *ritvik* representatives of the acarya, conducting specific activities on behalf of Srila Prabhupada while he was present and involved in the process. No, the July 9th Letter does not say that the system it describes should stop, nor does it say that it should continue after Prabhupada's departure. It does not say the representatives should continue acting on behalf of the acarya even when he is no longer there to be represented and personally participate in the process, as he said he would be in both the July 9th Letter and the July 7th Conversation that preceded it.

But make no mistake: the *ritvik* system TFO referred to above, for which it says no stop order exists, is **NOT** the same system of *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* that Srila Prabhupada is discussing in this May 28th Conversation, as our analysis clearly proves. TFO essentially admits this, in the last quote above. Yet still, TFO employs the May 28th Conversation in an attempt to bolster its assertion of longevity in the July 9th order. Knowing that 'henceforward' cannot carry the argument, it points to the May 28th reference to *after Srila Prabhupada's departure*.

Furthermore, the system described in the July 9th Letter **does** have an inherent stop order, which we have described below in terms of the *impossibility of performance* principle (['Start, Stop, Duration'](#)).

"After our exhaustive analysis of the May 28th conversation, it is clear that what the GBC is presenting is a classic circular argument:"

In fact, TFO is presenting its own flawed argument. While not exactly circular in nature, it is predicated on more than 130 different errors: errors of assumption, errors of fact, logic and omission, philosophical errors, contradictions, unsubstantiated claims and instances of word jugglery. [\[APX-3\]](#)

Krishnakant writes:

"Thus the persons Srila Prabhupada will appoint to assist with initiations **AFTER** his departure he denotes as '**OFFICIATING**' or '**RITVIKS**', **NOT** 'initiating'."

Again, we can see how TFO eliminates the word *acarya* used in Srila Prabhupada's actual statements: *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*. Clearly, this is done for the purpose of convincing readers that the *ritviks* (*ritvik* representatives of the acarya) are non-initiating **officiators** named in the July 9th Letter – **and** they are one and the same as the **officiating** acaryas mentioned on May 28th... those who would be empowered to act after Srila Prabhupada's departure. But as we have just proved, that is not the truth.

In Krishnakant's paper, *The Real Appointment Tape*, [28] he writes:

"i) Since the only two entities in question in this conversation are Srila Prabhupada and his disciples; ii) And having already established above that officiators and initiators are two different entities; iii) And since Srila Prabhupada has already referred to his disciples as 'officiating', it follows that Srila Prabhupada must be the initiator, since the officiator and initiator are not the same person."

This is the very same conclusion he leads his readers to in *The Final Order*, and it is **patently false**. This is a lynchpin of asiddhantic Ritvik-vada philosophy.

The debate will no doubt rage on in the devotee community as to whether or not extant copies of the May 28th Conversation audio tape have been tampered with [28], or not [30]. But what no one questions in their commentaries on the May 28th Conversation is that Srila Prabhupada clearly said *officiating acarya(s)*, and confirmed that this meant *ritvik acarya(s)*. Fortunately, future debates about the difference between an *acarya* and a *ritvik* representative of **the** Acarya have nothing at all to do with the quality of the May 28th audio tape.

In Summary

The GBC/ISKCON's current Diksa Guru program does not feature calling anyone an ISKCON 'Acarya', although TFO author Krishnakant characterizes the current GBC Diksa Guru program as a "Multiple Acarya Succession System", claiming that the GBC does still promote their diksa gurus as acaryas.

The Ritvik-vadis on the basis of TFO, distinguish themselves from the GBC by saying that Srila Prabhupada appointed **not** successor acaryas, but *ritviks* to carry on initiations after his departure – a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system wherein these *ritviks* officiate in making diksa disciples on behalf of Srila Prabhupada after his departure. In this way, they distance themselves from the claim that Srila Prabhupada named successor acaryas.

But as we have demonstrated, the Ritvik-vada system actually derives its authority from the notion that these *ritviks* are, in fact, acaryas – they are the *officiating acaryas*/ *ritvik acaryas* mentioned on May 28th. On one hand, the Ritvik-vadis say "No! Srila Prabhupada did not name successor acaryas!" On the other hand, they say that he named *ritviks* to serve as **officiating initiators** – but the only way TFO can argue that these *ritviks* are authorized to serve after Srila Prabhupada's departure is by claiming that they **are** acaryas – the same **officiating acaryas** mentioned in the May 28th Conversation.

We argue that in the July 9th Letter, Srila Prabhupada **did not authorize anyone to act as acarya**: not *ritvik acarya*, not *officiating acarya*, not *diksa guru acarya*. Rather, he named 11 senior men to assist him as *ritvik representatives* of **the** acarya, and to act in that capacity while he was present and involved in the system.

We do not accept that the role of *acarya* is synonymous with, or non-different than, so many other roles. By virtue of the logic it employs, TFO essentially claims that there is no difference at all between the 'representative' and the 'acarya' himself. We contend that an **acarya** and a **representative** of the acarya are two different things.

"Sunlight is existing in the sun, but sun is not present in the sunshine. Without sun there is no sunshine." (*Srila Prabhupada Lecture on Bhagavad-gita 4.42, Aug 4, 1976*)

We say there is **no evidence** that the *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* Srila Prabhupada referred to in the May 28th Conversation, who he said he would recommend after "*this*" (unknown event) "*is settled up*", are one and the same as the eleven *rittik representatives* of the acarya named in the July 9th Letter.

We are **not** arguing on the basis of definition about the qualifications of an "*acarya*". That is not the determining factor.

We are arguing about the assignment of the title, "*acarya*". While that title was mentioned on May 28th, it was **not assigned** on July 9th. The title of *acarya* was not given by virtue of the naming of 11 *rittik* representatives of the acarya on July 9th. These representatives were specifically deputed in the letter to act while Srila Prabhupada was present. The *acaryas* mentioned on May 28th were specifically mentioned as being initiators after Prabhupada's departure. **They are not one and the same.** ③(a-b)

In fact, the May 28th dialogue **specifically** says they are **not** one and the same. Srila Prabhupada says the *officiating/ritvik acarya(s)* will be recommended "*After this is settled up.*" Not that they are, here and now on May 28th, being recommended or ordered to action. ②(a)

Speculatively suggesting that such an assignment was made, for the purpose of affirming that the *rittik* representatives have a right to assist, is simply unnecessary. The July 9th Letter says very clearly what is being instructed. The July 9th instructions don't need to have layered on top of them the May 28th reference to the word "officiating" in order for the July 9th instructions to be understandable or valid.

The July 9th Letter does not need to be married up to the May 28th Conversation in order to make it stand. It does not require associating *rittik* representatives" with "*officiating acarya(s)*" or "*ritvik acarya(s)*" in order for the letter to be clear. This bridging together of two communications has been constructed by the author of TFO as a means to extract a particular interpretation out of Srila Prabhupada's instructions – an interpretation that fits the Ritvik-vada post-samadhi agenda. And the GBC have allowed themselves to be unnecessarily co-opted into this situation, as they've defended their own *guru-tattva* against the Ritvik-vadis.

Clearly, the '*acarya(s)*' mentioned on May 28th are to be diksa gurus. Mention of '*rittik representatives* of the *acarya*' on July 9th, without inclusion of the word '*acaryas*' in reference to the *rittik*s, specifically implies that these representatives are **not** diksas. It is not just that we have an omission of the term '*acarya*' in the July 9th Letter. When tied to the May 28th Conversation, the absence of that word actually proves to be a specific contra-indication – because in the July 9th Letter, just as in the July 7th Conversation that preceded it, Srila Prabhupada has made clear that he will be a participant in the system.

Srila Prabhupada had every opportunity to follow-up on his comments of May 28th by specifically recommending some of his disciples to act as *officiating acarya/ritvik acarya*. He never did so. He stopped short of that very significant assignment, instead naming only 11 *rittik* representatives to assist with initiations while he was present.

Although the current ISKCON institutional Diksa Guru program does not feature calling anyone an '*acarya*' (in fact, doing so was prohibited under *GII 1.5.6.1* [\[1\]](#)), the current system is nonetheless based upon the notion that on May 28th, 1977, Srila Prabhupada ordered that diksa gurus would act after his departure, and these personalities were referred to in the conversation as *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)*; and they were likewise mentioned in the July 9th Letter as the *rittik representatives*, who were then being ordered to assist Srila Prabhupada, but (according to the GBC) upon his departure they would begin initiating as diksa gurus themselves, having gotten the order to do so on May 28th by virtue of the statement, "*After this is settled up, I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acaryas*."

We contend that no such order was given on May 28th by virtue of this statement.

The GBC, in order to give its institutional authorization and support to a sastrically sound system for diksa initiations, does not need to tangle itself up in the same asiddhantic ball of confusion the Ritvik-vadis are tied up in by way of *The Final Order*. The standing body of Srila Prabhupada's instructions and Gaudiya Vaisnava sastra provide the basis for ISKCON's ongoing diksa guru system. No contrived interpretations of the May 28th Conversation, bridged over to the July 9th Letter are needed in order for the GBC to properly lead the society's *guru-tattva*.

START, STOP, DURATION

While the word '*henceforward*' draws the most attention in terms of a timeframe associated with the July 9th Letter, TFO makes quite a number of assertions about the start, termination, and duration of the July 9th order that don't hinge on '*henceforward*'.

There is no specific statement in the July 9th Letter regarding the continuation or the stoppage of actions directly referent to the *rittik* representatives or the Temple Presidents. In the absence of an order either to stop or to continue under specific circumstances, one cannot arbitrarily say that one or the other must win out.

However, logic dictates that in a scenario comprising three parties (Srila Prabhupada, Temple Presidents and *ritvik* representatives), if one party becomes absent to the transactional relationship (the initiations process), then the other parties would naturally modify their behavior accordingly. No special instruction is needed in order for one party to stop talking (or sending letters of recommendation) to another party into the future when that party is no longer there to listen or receive. This is only common sense.

We must also consider whether there is some other source of instruction or authorization that informs as to what the Temple Presidents and *ritvik* representatives should do upon Srila Prabhupada's departure ... stop or continue? And that information is available – it is present in sastra and in the body of Srila Prabhupada's instructions regarding the age-old process for diksa and the continuation of the disciplic succession. It is there in the May 28th Conversation.

TFO states:

"Since there is no ***direct evidence*** stating that the *ritvik* system should have been abandoned on Srila Prabhupada's physical departure, [EF 17 p. 60] the case for abandoning it could therefore only be based on ***indirect evidence***." [EL 12 p. 60]

But there ***is*** direct evidence: Srila Prabhupada made it clear that he would *physically* participate in the initiations system. Naturally, when he departed he could no longer do so. This is the simplest, most unavoidable ***direct evidence*** one could ask for. But as discussed above, TFO ignores the July 9th Letter instruction – the final statement of instruction in the letter – that says the names of initiates are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada for his book. In the same way, it ignores Srila Prabhupada's July 7th statement, "*India, I am here*". [EL 2 p. 19]

The July 9th Letter may not specifically say *it should run while Srila Prabhupada is still present*, but that is certainly implied by what it says, which is essentially this: here is the system, Prabhupada is part of it, commence following it. The word "*still*" present has nothing to do with it. Prabhupada is present; Prabhupada is part of the system; start following it. Obviously if he continues to be *still present*, and the standing order has not changed, then you will continue following it. Not that Prabhupada would have to repeat the order every day, or every hour that he's *still* here.

Also obvious is the fact that when Srila Prabhupada is no longer present, he will no longer be available to participate in the system. Here is the system, Prabhupada is part of the system, start following it. When Prabhupada has departed, the system – which is designed to include him – cannot function with him. Therefore, the system is impacted.

The July 9th Letter does not need to include a specific start order to prove that it should run while Srila Prabhupada is present: he was present when he ordered the system, he made himself part of the system, and by executing the letter, he effectively said "start". Obviously, it should run while he is present; it says nothing to the contrary. The fact that the obvious is not unnecessarily stated does not change the meaning, although that's what TFO attempts to suggest, in circular fashion.

Nor, in order for the system to stop, must there be a specific termination order. Again, the equivalent of a 'stop order' is implied in the letter: here is the system, Prabhupada is part of the system, start following it. If Prabhupada has departed, the system designed to include him can no longer function with him, therefore, unless there is some other instruction for its continuity under this altered circumstance, naturally it must stop. A key element of its functionality is no longer present; it can no longer function as intended, therefore it stops.

In law, this principle is known as *impossibility of performance*. [18] The principle is that if it becomes impossible, due to uncontrollable circumstances (e.g., death or *force majeure*) to do what an agreement calls for, then either party can break the contract. Likewise, if one party to a transactional relationship becomes unavailable to perform his part, not by choice or negligence but by uncontrollable circumstance, then the agreement is terminated. If there is no other prior agreement stated to deal with a given termination scenario, then the principle of *impossibility of performance* arises.

In TFO's counter to Objection #3, it states:

"If an instruction is impossible to perform, for example giving Srila Prabhupada his daily massage after his physical departure, then obviously there can be no question of doing it. [C 6 p. 72] The duty of a disciple is simply to follow an order until it is impossible to follow any longer, or until the spiritual master changes the order." [EO 1 p. 72]

Here, TFO basically acknowledges the principle of *impossibility of performance*, although it goes on to argue against a determination of *impossibility* in the context of the July 9th order.

In the quote above, TFO erroneously omits a third and obvious option: *The duty of a disciple is simply to follow an order until it is impossible to follow any longer, or until the spiritual master changes the order, OR until that order is supplanted by a preceding, standing order that is triggered by a given event.* Sastra provides Absolute instructions for how the disciplic succession is to continue in the event the Spiritual Master departs. [PE 2 p. 59] These standing instructions, like all instructions in sastra, do not need a special invitation in order to come into play. They are simply there, to be followed as part and parcel of Vaisnava protocol.

TFO's approach to the July 9th Letter is, essentially, that the only element in the entire letter that informs the starting, stopping or duration of the instructions contained therein is the word '*henceforward*'. It says that '*henceforward*' means start immediately and don't stop for any reason, suggesting this means even for as long as 10,000 years. But this is a foolishly simplistic conclusion, with nothing to support it.

Among the many lines of argument TFO employs are the following:

"The letter does not specify that the *ritvik* system should be followed on July 9th either, so according to this logic it should never have been followed at all." [EF 22 p. 70]

But the Letter does specify that the *ritvik* system should be followed on July 9th. The specified start date is clearly implied in the dated message – it is immediate. Beginning from now, July 9th, the date the letter is executed – that is the effective date. The letter does not say 'start tomorrow', nor does it provide information on anything that triggers a delayed start, therefore the effective date is the date of the communication.

"The demand for the *ritvik* system to only operate within a pre-specified time period is contradicted by accepting its operation for 126 separate 24 hour time periods (i.e. four months)." [WJ 4 p. 70]

Here, TFO moves beyond word jugglery and into the surreal. One need only follow sound logic on the matter of an operating timeframe with start and stop triggers. Obviously, there is no point in dividing up time into arbitrarily thin slices during the operating period in order to determine start, stop, or duration.

"Since none of these 126 separate time periods is specified in the letter, yet everyone seems quite happy that the system ran during this time frame." [EF 23 p. 71]

Nor was everyone "quite happy" that the system was running during the July to November time frame. Among those not happy were disciples queued up, anxiously waiting to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada. Nor were Temple Presidents happy, who had sent letters of recommendation to the 11 *ritviks*, only to have them not acted upon. The author of this paper, DOR, happened to be the Temple President of Seattle during this period, and I can attest that numerous letters of recommendation sent to the appropriate *ritvik* representative were never acted upon.

"Unless we take the word 'henceforward' literally to mean 'indefinitely', we could stop the system at any time after July 9th, so why choose departure?" [EL 18 p. 71]

We do take the word '*henceforward*' literally – in context: "...Temple Presidents may *henceforward* send recommendation..." That statement does not contain a time-sensitive trigger that would stop the system depending on how '*henceforward*' is interpreted. Nor are we required to give '*henceforward*' a literal definition of 'indefinitely, forever' in order to understand that it should not be stopped arbitrarily, on July 11th, for example.

The July 9th Letter does not contain a specific stop order. It does, however, describe elements of the system, and these elements are subject to the principle of *impossibility of performance*, as explained above. The system cannot be stopped arbitrarily at any time while Srila Prabhupada is present unless he stops it – at least, not without disobeying him.

TFO makes a further error of logic in suggesting that while Srila Prabhupada was present, the system could be stopped arbitrarily by his followers, on the basis of how they chose to interpret the word '*henceforward*', and that such stoppage would be acceptable. Of course, that is also not true.

And again, TFO's logic is flawed in its presumption that '*henceforward*' refers to the actions of the 11 *ritvik* representatives, when in fact, it refers to the actions of the Temple Presidents.

"There is no example, either in Srila Prabhupada's 86 recorded uses, nor in the entire history of the English language, where the actual word 'henceforward' has ever meant:

'Every time period until the departure of a person who issued the order''
[WJ 5 p. 72]

Of course, it is plainly evident that the author of TFO does not have command of the complete history of usage of the English language, nor is he likely to know as a fact that some court of law hasn't assigned just that meaning to the term '*henceforward*'. Anyone who understands the law can imagine countless scenarios wherein the court might adopt just such an interpretation of '*henceforward*'. One only needs to consult a legal dictionary to see that this is true.

TFO eventually returns to a more sensible line of argument, making its counter to Objection #3:

"The question then is whether it is feasible to follow a *ritvik* system without the physical presence of the person who set it up." **[EL 19 p. 73]**

Based on the stated Objection #3 and the content of the July 9th Letter, TFO has framed this summation question incorrectly. It should have been written:

"The question then is whether it is feasible to follow a *ritvik* system without the physical presence of **one named as a key participant**."

The question does not hinge on the fact that Srila Prabhupada set the system up, but rather on the fact that he is described as a key participant. And if a required element/person disappears or becomes unavailable to the system, then it is common sense to conclude that the way the system operates has changed. In the absence of an ameliorating instruction, the reality of Srila Prabhupada's departure effectively serves as a 'stop order' – again it is the *impossibility of performance* principle.

This brings us to a key point not raised in Objection #3 and TFO's counter to it – the possibility (if not the likelihood) that Srila Prabhupada wished to be a participant in the July 9th system, and to remain a part of it until he ordered otherwise, because it provided him with direct oversight of the process. As the recipient of names of new initiates – no matter who wrote them into the book – he would have direct knowledge of how his system was working, insofar as how many initiates were being processed through it. This would enable him to take remedial action, if he wished, should the system not function to his liking.

"In fact, the *ritvik* system was set up *specifically* to be operational without *any* physical involvement from Srila Prabhupada whatsoever. Had the *ritvik* system continued after his departure, it would be identical in every respect to how it was practiced whilst Srila Prabhupada was present." **[EL 2 p. 19] [EF 21 p. 67]**

This is incorrect, on two counts. First, in the July 7th Conversation that was memorialized by the July 9th Letter, Srila Prabhupada clearly stated his own continued involvement, saying, "*India, I am here.*" [EL 2 p. 19] Second, the closing statement in the July 9th Letter says that names of new disciples should be sent **to Srila Prabhupada**, to be included in his book. [EF 21 p. 67]

So a *ritvik* system functioning after Prabhupada's departure would **not** be identical in every respect: Srila Prabhupada would not be participating in India, he would not be receiving letters devotees sent to him with names of new initiates, therefore he would not necessarily have direct knowledge of who was (or wasn't) being initiated. And perhaps most importantly, he would not be physically present to oversee the system. We can only speculate as to the many possible implications of that fact, given the inconceivable nature of such transcendental oversight.

"This being the case, we cannot classify the *ritvik* system dysfunctional, or inoperable, on the grounds of Srila Prabhupada's departure, since his departure does not in any way affect the running of the system." [PE 3 p. 74] [EL 19 p. 73]

This callous statement appears to make the grievous error of suggesting that Srila Prabhupada's physical presence matters not, one way or the other. Even if the July 9th Letter didn't say what it does – that names are to be sent to Srila Prabhupada – even then, it would be offensive to suggest that Srila Prabhupada's physical presence wouldn't matter at all with respect to the system of initiations going on, on his behalf. To suggest that the pure devotee's physical presence does not change things going on around him is actually asiddhantic.

In an effort to debate the GBC's *guru-tattva* position, TFO asserts a number of arguments focused on the notion that the GBC *suspended* the July 9th order, thus disobeying it.

"Immediately after Srila Prabhupada's physical departure, on November 14th 1977, the GBC suspended this system." [EF 11 p. 20]

As mentioned earlier, the bottleneck problem dealt with on July 7th was a result of the fact that the senior men had, in large part, **already suspended** the process in place for initiations. And from July 9th until the time of Srila Prabhupada's departure, the '*ritvik* system' can only be said to have functioned in a limited way. Thus, it cannot be said that "*on November 14th 1977, the GBC suspended this system*".

TFO presents Objection #5:

"5) "Maybe there was some special background surrounding the issuing of the order that precludes its application after Srila Prabhupada's departure?"

What precludes application of the system after Srila Prabhupada's departure is the absence of a post-samadhi instruction, and the fact that he was a stated participant in the system. However, there are three notable background issues to consider:

First, there is the May 28th Conversation, which is the only instance, up to the time of the July 9th Letter, when *ritviks* were mentioned in relationship to initiations. In that conversation, the term was used in the specific context of *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who would conduct diksa initiation after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

Second, there is the July 7th Conversation, which was memorialized two days later by the July 9th Letter. That conversation was comprised of a problem (the bottleneck) being presented to Srila Prabhupada, and his giving a solution to it. There was absolutely no mention, no indication of anything associated with a plan for initiations after his departure. Just the opposite: on July 7th, Srila Prabhupada stated that he would serve as a participant in the system.

Third, there is the standing body of sastric instruction on continuation of the disciplic succession. And of course, Srila Prabhupada's comments on May 28th were, as always, in complete accord with sastra.

In TFO's counter-argument to Objection #5 we read:

"...had Srila Prabhupada intended the *ritvik* system to stop on his departure he would have added the following seven words to the July 9th letter - "This system will terminate on my departure"." [EL 20 p. 79]

None of us is in a position to say what Srila Prabhupada would or would not do in expressing his intentions – nor can we arrive at a definitive conclusion by speculating as to his intentions. Of course, following TFO's logic, if Srila Prabhupada had wanted to establish a post-samadhi *ritvik* system then all he had to do was say so: "*Henceforward, for 10,000 years, all diksa initiates in ISKCON will be my own direct disciples.*" But the letter does not say that either.

TFO asserts that, "*A quick look at the letter tells us he wanted it to continue 'henceforward'.*" And a "quick look" is obviously all Krishnakant hopes the readers will give it, because if one gives it any more study than that, it will quickly become apparent that the July 9th Letter does not instruct a '*henceforward*' *ritvik* diksa system that will go on after Srila Prabhupada's departure.

Given the absence of an instruction in the July 9th Letter for establishment of a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system; and given extant instructions from Srila Prabhupada on continuation of the disciplic succession after his departure such as those found in the May 28th Conversation; and given the standing body of sastric instructions for continuation of the disciplic succession; and given the absence of anything to contradict sastra and Prabhupada's instructions, his followers are duty-bound to accept them – and to accept that Srila Prabhupada's branch of the *sampradaya* will continue, as the *sampradaya* has for countless years, with some of his disciples making their own diksa disciples. No amount of word jugglery on TFO's part can change that.

CONTINUATION OF DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION

"The one matter that had not yet been settled was how initiations would operate when he left. At this point, no one had the faintest clue how things were to run. [EF 26 p. 80]
[PE 2 p. 59]

Certainly, the devotees had already been instructed as to how initiations operate once the Spiritual Master departs. These standing instructions are embodied in sastra, and Srila Prabhupada had preached on the subject of disciplic succession many times, discussing it as recently as May 28th, 1977. In that conversation, Srila Prabhupada reiterated what he had said many times before, clarifying how initiations would operate when he left:

"...in my presence one should not become guru, so on my behalf. On my order, amara ajnaya guru hana, (he is) (be) actually guru. But by my order." []

"When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple."

He also said in that conversation:

"Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating acarya(s)."

The fact is, for whatever reason, Srila Prabhupada never did appoint any *officiating acarya(s)*, just as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta had not. But for TFO to say that "*no one had the faintest clue how things were to run*" is to ignore all the standing instructions and the devotees who were well versed in sastra. They did know what had already been instructed. Granted, in 1977, those who had their eye on Zonal Acarya-ism can't be counted among 'those who knew'. But other devotees at the time knew full well what sastra said, and what Prabhupada had preached – and they were summarily driven out of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness for speaking up in that regard. This is an inarguable fact of ISKCON history. For TFO to casually suggest that '*no one had a clue*' is disingenuous and offensive to the stalwart devotees who **did** know, and paid a great price for acting upon that knowledge.

Referring to Srila Prabhupada's lecture on *Caitanya-caritamrta* (April 6, 1975), [23] TFO states:

"The *ritvik* system was to ensue that when these followers became suitably qualified for initiation, they could receive *diksa* from Srila Prabhupada, just as they could when he gave the above lecture." [PE 4 p. 89]

In this lecture, Srila Prabhupada was encouraging all his followers to become trained up as acaryas, so they could exponentially grow the Krsna consciousness Movement. Yes, as part of that message, he said they should not become acarya while the guru (himself) was still present. But he **did not say** that devotees should get trained up as *ritviks*, initiating on his behalf, to expand the number of his diksa disciples. This is simply TFO's concocted interpretation which, because it goes to the heart of *guru-tattva*, is a serious philosophical error.

In his *Caitanya-caritamrta* lecture, Srila Prabhupada was not just referring to his desires for the movement during his physical presence. This is indicated, for example, by the fact that he said his trained disciples should become acaryas, but while he is present they should bring candidates for initiation to him. Not that acarya-ship is conditional while Prabhupada is present (the disciples are his), **and** it remains conditional after his departure (the disciples are **still** his). It is not that even though they have followed his order and trained up to be a bona fide acarya/guru, even after their Spiritual Master has departed and the period of restraint borne of etiquette is passed, they **still** cannot initiate as diksa gurus because they must continue to bring all candidates to him. In fact, **Srila Prabhupada says no such thing**: not in the *Caitanya-caritamrta* lecture, not in the July 9th Letter, not anywhere. This is an **asiddhantic contrivance** perpetrated by the author of *The Final Order*.

TFO's asiddhantic thesis presumes that as the line of disciplic succession grows forward from Srila Prabhupada's branch of the Gaudiya Vaisnava tree, that among the anticipated millions of *jivatmas* that would purportedly become his diksa disciples, all of them would be denied the opportunity of themselves ever becoming diksa gurus – no matter how qualified, how bona fide; no matter if they are *maha-bhagavata*, *uttama-adhikari nitya-siddhas*... no matter if they already got Srila Prabhupada's direct order to become diksa guru by way of a letter, or whether they get the order sometime in future from a dream, the Book Bhagavat, or Chaitya Guru: none of them may ever become diksa gurus. Even Srila Prabhupada himself would be prohibited from coming back in another lifetime, to serve as diksa in the Gaudiya Vaisnava ISKCON branch he had founded.

It is a ludicrous proposition.

Srila Prabhupada followed Srila Bhaktisiddhanta

In the introductory paragraph of TFO's 'Evidence' section, and again in the 'Appointment Tape' section, we find another serious philosophical mistake made by the author of TFO: **[PE 1 p. 11]**

"When one considers the magnitude of the order in question, namely the continuation of the Sankirtan mission for up to ten thousand years, and what happened to the Gaudiya Math over precisely this issue, it seems inconceivable that Srila Prabhupada would have managed things in this way. However this is what we must believe if we are to accept the present GBC position."

First, there is the incorrect assumption that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta and Srila Prabhupada Thakurs could have controlled what happened after their departures. In fact, Sri Krsna is in control. Second, what happened after both Acaryas departed undoubtedly was, to a degree, predictable by pure devotees having full knowledge of the Absolute and of nescience. Knowing the nature of the fallen conditioned souls, the predictable future outcomes for both the Gaudiya Matha and ISKCON were likely clear to these *nitya-siddha* pure devotees.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta described this very situation, precisely and eloquently in his famous lecture on Putana's pastimes [4], commonly referred to as his 'Organized Religion' lecture: *"The church that has the best chance of survival in this damned world is that of atheism under the convenient guise of theism."*

It should be no surprise that Srila Prabhupada would follow exactly in the footsteps of his Spiritual Master, as he did. And while TFO suggests that Srila Prabhupada would never leave the subject of initiations *"up in the air, ambiguous, or in any way open to debate or speculation"*, it is a failure of logic to assume that Srila Prabhupada could prevent his neophyte followers from speculating or debating amongst themselves, no matter how specific his instructions were.

Finally, we have the grievous philosophical mistake made by suggesting, even subtly, that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta erred in making his own provisions for succession, that as a result his matha suffered from mismanagement, and that Srila Prabhupada would never make such a mistake knowing about the prior failure. All such notions are patently false. In arriving at conclusions like these, that it is *"inconceivable that Srila Prabhupada would have managed things in this way"*, TFO's author has crossed the line into offensiveness.

Post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa

"If a system of initiation can be rejected solely on the grounds that it has no exact historical precedent, [WJ 8 p. 94] then we would certainly be forced to reject the current guru system within ISKCON by the same token."

TFO's use of the word '*exact*' suggests that common disagreement with Ritvik-vada is a matter of nuance; that there is *similar* historical precedent, just not an *exact* precedent. But in fact, there is **no** precedent at all for post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa in our Gaudiya line.

"The fact that the identical system to *ritvik* is not directly mentioned in *sastra*, or ancient Vedic texts, is also not pertinent. According to some Vedic rules, *sudras* and women should not even receive *brahmin* initiation at all: [PE 5 p. 95]

"Diksa cannot be offered to a sudra [...] This initiation is offered not according to Vedic rules, because it is very difficult to find out a qualified brahmana."

(SP Bg. Lecture, 29/3/71, Bombay)"

Again, TFO introduces the word '*identical*' in the same way as the previous statement about "*no exact historical precedent*". In fact, there is no system even close to the *ritvik* system mentioned in sastra. Post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa is conspicuously absent from sastra and sampradaya history – not that there is something very similar, but not quite *identical*.

The comparison TFO draws between a system for initiation like *ritvik* and the qualifications of a candidate for initiation is erroneous. The philosophical tenets that are contravened by the Ritvik-vada system are very different from the aspects of philosophy involved in the matter of who is qualified to take diksa in Kali-yuga.

TFO presents a Bombay lecture quote as a means of substantiating its assertion that the absence of historical precedent is no reason to reject its post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory. In other words, sudras are given diksa in ISKCON not in accordance with Vedic rules, therefore a Ritvik system that is also not according to Vedic rules should be accepted. But when we look at the quote from Srila Prabhupada's Lecture on Bhagavad-gita in context, we can see how TFO misapplies the quote. Clearly, the instruction is that "*diksa is offered according to Pancaratrici-vidhi*" – "*that is recommended in this age.*" The excerpt quoted by TFO, that diksa for sudras is "*not according to Vedic rules*" is conveniently presented out of context. TFO does not point out that the Acaryas of our sampradaya have not established for application in Kaliyuga a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system that is equivalent to a *Pancaratrici-vidhi* system. TFO doesn't point this out, because it wants the reader to conclude that's exactly what Srila Prabhupada did. But nowhere do we find a statement that by following a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system in Kali-yuga under the guidance of a proper spiritual master, one can be elevated to the point of understanding the Absolute Truth.

"The important point is that although the *ritvik* system may be totally unique, (at least as far as we know), it does not violate higher order *sastric* principles." [PE 7 p. 97]

In fact, there are a number of aspects of the post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa theory that violate *sastric* principles, including the following:

- the rule of disciplic succession (or *law of disciplic succession*) that when the diksa guru departs, the qualified disciple may become diksa guru;
- the rule of *pariksa* (mutual testing of guru and disciple candidates); [24]
- limiting the Supreme Personality of Godhead by suggesting He cannot send an initiating guru in Srila Prabhupada's line, and that in the form of Chaitya Guru, He cannot direct a candidate to one of Srila Prabhupada's disciples who would act as a bona fide diksa;
- thus restricting the jiva's free will, creating an obstacle to the individual who may wish to repose their loving affections in a personality other than Srila Prabhupada and desiring them as diksa guru.

Ritvik-vada asserts a completely unprecedented system for continuation of the disciplic succession – an asiddhantic system that goes against sastric principles such as *pariksa*, free will and the role of Chaitya Guru, what to speak of the threefold test of Guru, Sadhu and Sastra. Yet TFO argues that just such a system was set down by Srila Prabhupada, by way of nothing more than a letter that says: "...*Temple Presidents may henceforward send recommendation for first and second initiation to whichever of these eleven representatives are nearest their temple.*" That is the core of *The Final Order*, and the foundation of Ritvik-vada.

'RITVIK' TERMINOLOGY

While the arguments on nomenclature presented in DOR may at first seem tedious, we urge the reader to carefully consider how terminology is employed in TFO's various arguments, and the absence of evidence to support TFO's usage of terms. Doing so, the reader will see the liberties that have been taken and the wrong assumptions that have been peddled, which go to the heart of the Ritvik-vada conclusion. We cannot take these matters of rhetoric lightly.

"To get connected to the bona fide *acarya* through the use of representatives was the experience of initiation that was familiar for thousands of disciples. The July 9th letter defines the word '*ritvik*' [EF 32 p. 98] as meaning: '**representative of the *acarya***'."

Again, the July 9th Letter does not mention the word "*ritvik*". The word used is "*rittik*", and it is defined as meaning: '*representative of the acarya*' specifically for the purpose of performing first and second initiations in a system that includes Srila Prabhupada as a participant. Not '*representative of the acarya*' in all matters, or *representative with power of attorney*, or *representative with sole responsibility of managerial affairs* – or any other roles TFO might suggest should be attributed to the *ritvik* representatives. Nor is *rittik* defined as being an *officiating acarya* or *ritvik acarya*.

"The letter, which was sent out to new initiates, would no longer be signed by Srila Prabhupada, and the selection of all the initiates' names would be done by the *ritviks*. Also the procedure was now linked with the relatively unfamiliar word - '*ritvik*'." [EF 31 & 32 p. 98]

As TFO acknowledges, the term '*ritvik*' was relatively unfamiliar. Why then treat so casually the fact that in the July 9th Letter, the word is spelled in a particular way – "*rittik*" – even **put in quotation marks to emphasize the unusual term**? That is not mentioned anywhere in TFO.

The correct spelling, as it appears in the July 9th Letter, is mentioned only two places in TFO: once in the text copy of the letter itself, and once in its counter-argument to Objection #25. Everywhere else, TFO misrepresents the spelling of the word. The author has perhaps decided that it was a typographical error, and has replaced it with the word he assumes Tamal Krishna and Srila Prabhupada meant... even though it was an unfamiliar word, had **never** previously been used by Srila Prabhupada to refer to initiations, and was emphasized in quotation marks in

the July 9th Letter. We have written on this subject at great length in "Evidence Tampering: Rtvik Sleight of Hand, Part One" [\[9\]](#).

"Although unfamiliar to many, the word '*ritvik*' was not new either. The word and its derivatives had already been defined 32 times by Srila Prabhupada in his books. [\[EF 33 p. 100\]](#) What was 'new' was that the system which had already been in existence for many years was now put in writing with the necessary adjustments for the future."

The term '*ritvik*' and its derivations were mentioned 34 times in Srila Prabhupada's books, not 32 times. See our detailed comments in the full-length version of *Defeat of Ritvik-vada* on TFO's analysis of '*ritvik*' and its derivations ('Appointment Tape' – 'Conclusion' – Objection #1).

Under TFO's 'Related Objections' section, Krishnakant writes:

1) The word '*ritvik*' (*meaning priest*) and its derivatives actually have 32 *separate* references in Srila Prabhupada's books, only slightly less than the word *diksa* and its derivatives, which has 41 *separate* references in Srila Prabhupada books. Certainly, the use of *ritvik* priests to assist in ceremonies is a concept fully sanctioned in Srila Prabhupada's books:

In the list of citations TFO provides following the above statement, out of the mentioned 32 references, only 31 are listed. In comparing TFO's list of '*ritvik*' references against the Folio 2.0 (1990), we find several anomalies in spelling and citation text number (detailed in DOR).

Not included on the list is a citation from *Krsna Book*, Chapter 23, nor do we find on the list a citation from *Srimad Bhagavatam* 10th Canto that might correspond to it. In *Krsna Book* we find this description associated with the *rtvik*:

"There are various details to be observed in the performance of sacrifices, they are known collectively as *desa*. They are as follows: *kala* means the time, *prthag-dravya*, the different detailed paraphernalia, *mantra*, hymns, *tantra*, scriptural evidences, *agni*, fire, *rtvik*, learned performers of sacrifices, *devata*, the demigods, *yajamana*, the performer of the sacrifices, *kratu*, the sacrifice itself, and *dharma*, the procedures. All these are for satisfying Krsna." (*Krsna Book* 23)

One of main activities mentioned in the July 9th Letter that might be said to meet the criteria for '*rtvik, learned performers of sacrifices*' as set down here in *Krsna Book*, is not an activity the 11 *ritvik* representatives are instructed to perform. – the fire *yajna* is performed by the Temple Presidents.

In the Appendices of TFO is a section entitled, 'What is a *ritvik*?' In the ['Technical Notes'](#) section at the start of DOR, we have provided our own answer to that question, as it relates to nomenclature used in the *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*.

DEFEATING RITVIK-VADA

In simple terms, the foundation of Ritvik-vada was built by TFO in this manner:

- by dropping the word '*acarya*' from the *officiating/ritvik acarya* in the May 28th Conversation;
- marrying that *ritvik* up with the *ritvik* in the July 9th Letter, but without the *acarya*;
- co-opting a longevity factor from the May 28th Conversation (initiations after Prabhupada's departure); and
- marrying that longevity factor up with *henceforward* in the July 9th Letter for the post-samadhi element.

In so doing, TFO has:

- ignored the fact that the May 28th *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* were to be diksa gurus initiating their own disciples after Srila Prabhupada's departure;
- ignored the problem-solving connection between the July 7th Conversation and the July 9th Letter;
- ignored the fact that on July 7th, Srila Prabhupada said he would participate in the initiations system ("India, I am here");
- ignored the word '*may*', that refers to an optional action on the part of the Temple Presidents (not the *ritvik* representatives); and
- ignored the fact that Srila Prabhupada was part of the system described in the July 9th Letter.

TFO attempts to strengthen its position by adding the following evidence, which it refers to as 'supporting' and 'subsequent instructions':

- use of the words '*continue*' and '*future*' by Tamal Krishna in his personal correspondence to devotees (although Tamal Krishna's statements are not synonymous with Srila Prabhupada's instructions, and in no way modify Prabhupada's instructions)
- Srila Prabhupada's statement, "*become ritvik*", in a July 19th Conversation (conflicting versions of which are duplicated in TFO's Appendices, without citation, and which have no bearing on post-samadhi application of the system regardless)

- the Will, which mentions a '*system of management*' (but is actually related, very specifically, to properties and tangible assets, with absolutely no reference to initiations; and which predates the July 9th Letter by over a month)
- the Codicil (which refers to a Will of a different date, and which makes no mention of initiations)
- and two GBC Resolutions that allegedly indicate matters related to initiation fall under the '*system of management*' domain (but the Resolutions are misrepresented, and serve as proof of nothing to do with the July 9th Letter or post-samadhi initiations).

The cited letter from Tamal Krishna to Hansadutta, July 31st, 1977 states: "*...continue to become ritvik and act on my behalf.*" "*Continue to become*" indicates a work in progress for a representative who has not yet become a *ritvik*. In addition, there are anomalies regarding the quoted material contained in Tamal Krishna's letter, which does not match up with the audio transcript evidence. Even so, the statements in this letter can in no way be characterized as 'modifying the July 9th Letter instructions', which is the category of evidence assigned to these items by TFO's own definition.

The July 11, 1977 letter from Tamal Krishna to Kirtanananda, based on TFO's criteria for evidence, could only fall into the category of evidence that modifies the instructions of the July 9th Letter. And again, there is absolutely nothing in the letter that does any such thing. The letter simply mentions: "*...the process for initiation to be followed in the future*". But "*in the future*" cannot arbitrarily be made synonymous with '*henceforward*' or 'forever after for 10,000 years'. However, this letter is notable in that it defeats the notion that Srila Prabhupada's health was so precarious at the time that he had removed himself completely from the initiations process. That notion is also repudiated by the July 7th Conversation, the July 9th Letter, and by this July 11th Letter.

The third and final piece of evidence put forward in 'Supporting Instructions' is an excerpt from the July 19, 1977 Conversation. Again, it contains no statements which "*clearly indicate that the ritvik system was intended to continue without cessation*", or which "*only support the continuation of the ritvik system*", as TFO asserts. Although this piece of evidence falls into the category of 'conversation transcripts accepted as authentic by the GBC', we pointed out several anomalies related to the conversation excerpted. Most notably, the excerpt is duplicated in TFO's Appendices and there are very significant differences in the two texts, one going in favor of TFO's thesis.

With respect to the Will and Codicil, the date of the Will shows that it preceded the July 9th Letter, and therefore it cannot be considered a "subsequent instruction". The Will says nothing about initiations. The Codicil refers three times to a Will that has a different date than the one put into evidence by TFO. Furthermore, the Codicil says nothing about a "*system of management*", what to speak of referring to a system for initiations.

In his concluding remarks to the TFO section entitled 'The 'Appointment Tape', Krishnakant states:

"1. On July 9th 1977 Srila Prabhupada appointed 11 *ritviks* to carry out first and second initiations 'henceforward'."

He appointed 11 *ritvik representatives of the acarya*. He did not appoint *acaryas*. The *ritviks* he referred to on May 28th were specifically stated to be *officiating acarya(s)/ritvik acarya(s)* who would perform diksa initiations **after** Srila Prabhupada's departure. These persons are **not** one and the same as the 11 *ritvik representatives of the acarya*, who were instructed to assist with initiations, making diksa disciples on behalf of Srila Prabhupada **while he is present**.

Nor does the term '*henceforward*' refer to an action on the part of the 11 *ritvik* representatives. It refers to an action on the part of the Temple Presidents who **may**, in future, begin sending recommendations to the *ritvik* representative of the acarya who is closest to them. Not that they shall, or that they must send letters to them *henceforward*, for the next 10,000 years. Simply that the Temple Presidents *henceforward* may choose to send letters to the *ritviks* – an optional variation provided by Srila Prabhupada to streamline the system and resolve the bottleneck.

It cannot be said that because a letter, optionally sent by a Temple President, is received by a *ritvik* representative, that therefore the '*henceforward*' option would apply to the *ritvik*, even if the Temple President did not send them a letter. '*Henceforward*', as used in the July 9th Letter, does not refer equally to actions on the part of both Temple Presidents and *ritviks*.

When TFO refers to "*the order*" it is pointing collectively to the following:

- a) the July 9th Letter;
- b) a phrase in a devotee letter (July 19th) – "*continue to become ritvik*";
- c) the Will;
- d) the Codicil, and (presumably)
- e) phrases in two additional pieces of devotee correspondence (July 11th & 31st).

That represents the sum total of evidence in support of "*the order*", as TFO presents it.

We have defeated every aspect of TFO's collective evidence.

On May 28th, Srila Prabhupada said he would, sometime in future, recommend *officiating/ritvik acaryas*. **He never did so.**

Neither the May 28th Conversation, the July 7th Conversation or the July 9th Letter authorize a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system.

There is no evidence that Srila Prabhupada had the July 9th Letter issued in order to establish a system for post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa initiations – this is not indicated by the May 28th Conversation, by the July 7th Conversation, or by the July 9th Letter itself. The letter is clearly connected to the July 7th Conversation, in which a bottleneck problem was presented and Srila Prabhupada gave a solution for it. That solution was memorialized in the July 9th Letter.

In his conversations of May 28th and July 7th, Srila Prabhupada did not use the term '*henceforward*', or any other word referring to longevity that could be construed as relating to a post-samadhi *ritvik* instruction. Tamal Krishna introduced the word '*henceforward*' in the July 9th Letter he authored. And in the letter, the word '*henceforward*' is used in a sentence that specifically refers to an action on the part of the Temple Presidents – **not** to an action on the part of the 11 named *rittik* representatives.

We reject TFO's notion that upon Srila Prabhupada's departure, the statement in the July 9th Letter – "*Now that Srila Prabhupada has named these representatives, **Temple Presidents** may henceforward send recommendation*" – is an instruction that triggers a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system never before seen in our Gaudiya Sampradaya. Likewise, we reject the notion that this statement became the 'object of modification' by the GBC.

As we can understand by their own statements, [1 & 2] the GBC **did not** derive their primary authority for diksa gurus from '*henceforward*' – they derived it from the terms *officiating acarya(s)*/ *ritvik acarya(s)* in the May 28th Conversation, these being terms directly associated with initiations to be conducted after Srila Prabhupada's departure. The GBC bridged the word '*acarya*' over to the July 9th Letter primarily via the word '*rittik*', not the word '*henceforward*'. TFO makes an error of logic [EL 3 p. 22] in this regard, attempting to imbue '*henceforward*' with magical powers that it simply does not have, and accusing the GBC of doing the same.

'*Henceforward*' specifically refers in the letter to an action that may be taken by Temple Presidents. It does not refer to an action the *rittik* representatives must take. Yet TFO's Modifications **a)** and **b)** refer specifically to actions on the part of the *rittik* representatives – not to actions of the Temple Presidents. Claiming that '*henceforward*' has been 'modified' by the actions of the 11 representatives denies the fact that the word does not primarily refer to the *rittik* representatives.

"We shall base all our arguments solely on the philosophy and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada in his books, letters, lectures and conversations."

We can see that TFO has gone far beyond these hallowed bounds. The Modification **a)** and **b)** arguments are not based on the philosophy or the instructions of Srila Prabhupada, but rather on Krishnakant's interpretations of the GBC's actions, which he characterizes based on his own faulty logic.

In challenging the GBC, TFO states:

"Over the years increasing numbers of devotees have begun questioning the legitimacy of these basic assumptions."

Likewise, over the years an increasing number of devotees, including the authors of DOR, have been questioning the legitimacy and basic assumptions of Ritvik-vada.

Likewise, we don't accept the GBC's institutionalization of diksa, although we do accept the sastric injunction that qualified disciples may become diksa gurus themselves after the Spiritual Master departs. Despite this difference, we join the GBC in concluding that **Ritvik-vada cannot be substantiated by fact, logic or philosophy, and is asiddhantic.**

CONCLUSION

It has been our position over the years that Srila Prabhupada, beyond private statements like the one made to Tusta Krsna [8], remained purposely vague rather than give his disciples specific authorization as acaryas or successive diksa gurus. This was demonstrated not only by some of the things Prabhupada said, but even more so by what he did not say.

The May 28th dialogue began with Satsvarupa inquiring as to how initiations will be handled after Srila Prabhupada is no longer with us. Associating that conversation with the July 9th Letter, many devotees have struggled to understand why the letter – the final order on initiations – didn't specifically mention a system for post-samadhi initiations. Many have great difficulty accepting the concept that Srila Prabhupada would not definitively spell out who the exact personalities are that he approved of as being qualified diksa gurus following his departure. They do not understand how the Movement could go on without such a specific instruction for initiations after the close of Srila Prabhupada's manifest *lila*. Consequently, they have been convinced by Krishnakant, *The Final Order* and the Ritvik-vada movement borne of it, that the July 9th Letter is the crucially needed post-samadhi instruction.

We've stated numerous times our opinion as to why Srila Prabhupada didn't give specific authorization for acaryas or appoint successor diksa gurus – because he knew that his disciples were as yet qualified. He undoubtedly expected them to continue developing their Krsna consciousness, becoming qualified in the future. While we can only speculate about it, surely he understood that they thought they were qualified, and he no doubt anticipated that they would quickly assume the title and position of diksa guru after his departure. From a sastric perspective, of course, it is authorized for the qualified disciple to become diksa guru after the guru departs. Srila Prabhupada never went against sastric injunction, and therefore he wouldn't deny them their right to take disciples. At the same time, if he endorsed or specified who could assume that position, then he would essentially be held responsible for whatever they were going to do.

TFO asserts that in order to avoid the same problems experienced in Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's mission, Srila Prabhupada instituted a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system for ISKCON initiations after his departure. We say he did nothing of the sort, but simply followed his Spiritual Master in this regard – not that he attempted to improve upon his Guru Maharaja's methods. [PE 1 p. 11]

Like Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, our Prabhupada did not appoint successor acaryas. He remained somewhat vague as to exactly who would be authorized to give diksa initiations after his

departure, knowing full well that sastra lays down the rules in this regard – and these rules he had spoken many times. He was not required to name individuals who would succeed him as acaryas or as diksa gurus, just as his Spiritual Master had not done.

ISKCON *guru-tattva*

In 2004, the GBC passed a Resolution at the Annual Meeting, replacing 'On My Order-Understood' [2] as the official GBC policy on *guru-tattva*, offering in its place the language contained in Resolution. 409: "Continuing the Disciplic Succession". [33] No substantive changes have been made to ISKCON's policy on initiations since Resolution 409 was put on the books. Known officially as the "No Objection" Diksa Guru program, and more commonly referred to as the Guru Rubber-stamp program, it effectively serves as a representation of the GBC's present understanding of the final order on initiations contained within the July 9th Letter.

The GBC have not come to the same conclusion Tamal Krishna Goswami eventually did in his 1980 Pyramid House Confession – that when the Spiritual Master departs, the disciples have a right to become initiating gurus, not by appointment, but by sastraic injunction. Instead, as the 'ultimate managing authority', the GBC continues to enforce an institutional approach to diksa initiation that is neither siddhantically sound nor practically effective. Many GBC members and leaders today will admit (off the record) that the institutionalization of diksa in ISKCON is a failed experiment.

This paper, in addition to serving as our contribution to the defeat of *The Final Order* and Ritvik-vada, is also proffered as a bridge the GBC are encouraged to cross in eliminating some of the problems inherent to ISKCON *guru-tattva*. Adopting this solution, which is one step in the right direction, simply requires accepting and publicly acknowledging the following facts, which are clearly established in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*:

1. The July 9th Letter does not recommend 11 *officiating/ritvik acaryas* who will carry out diksa initiations after Srila Prabhupada's departure. It simply names 11 *rittik representatives of the acarya* to assist with initiations while Srila Prabhupada is present.
2. The word 'henceforward' in the July 9th Letter does not order that the 11 *rittik representatives of the acarya* will **automatically** become diksa gurus upon Srila Prabhupada's departure, initiating diksa disciples of their own. 'Henceforward' specifically refers to an optional action the Temple Presidents may take, not to an action the 11 *rittik*s must take ever after.
3. The standing body of Gaudiya Vaisnava sastra, within which Srila Prabhupada's own extensive body of instructions reside, provides ample basis for the process of disciplic succession – when the Spiritual Master departs, his qualified disciples may themselves become diksa gurus. Accepting and acting upon this sastraic platform does not require reliance upon an interpretation of the May 28th Conversation and July 9th Letter in which

the *officiating/ritvik acaryas* mentioned on May 28th are made to be one and the same as the 11 *rittik representatives* of **the** acarya named on July 9th.

The GBC's interpretation of the May 28th Conversation and July 9th Letter appear to have developed, in large part, as a defensive response to *The Final Order* manifesto and subsequent papers from the Ritvik-vadis. But the GBC can clarify the portion of their position that does not serve ISKCON *guru-tattva*, just as they changed their earlier conclusions via Resolution 409.

As stated in the GBC's *GII* handbook (1.5.6.1):

"No guru should declare himself or allow himself to be declared an "acarya" or "present acarya" for ISKCON or for a geographical area of ISKCON. There should be no use of the word acarya" as a title of office."

This edict would appear to reject an interpretation of the May 28th Conversation and July 9th Letter in which the *officiating/ritvik acaryas* mentioned on May 28th are one and the same as the 11 *rittik representatives* of **the** acarya named on July 9th. **Even so, that point of clarification should be clearly and specifically made by the GBC.**

The GBC has rightly rejected the Ritvik-vada interpretation of '*henceforward*' as an order for a post-samadhi *ritvik* diksa system. But they have not yet made it clear that their current institutional Diksa Guru program does not derive its authorization, like *The Final Order* conclusion does, from a bridge built from the May 28th mention of *officiating/ritvik acarya(s)* to the July 9th appointment of *rittik* representatives of **the** acarya.

If the GBC does not clarify its position by repudiating the notion that the July 9th Letter appointed 11 *ritviks* who were ordered, via the May 28th Conversation, to automatically become diksa gurus upon Srila Prabhupada departure, then they will continue to feed the fires of the asiddhantic Ritvik-vada. And there is **no need** for them to do so – it serves no practical purpose for the GBC or ISKCON at large. It only perpetuates the Great Ritvik Debate by suggesting, from the GBC side, that the July 9th Letter is imbued with an element of longevity that does not exist.

The ISKCON GBC are faced with the difficult task of understanding sastra, particularly Srila Prabhupada's many instructions, and putting them into practice as they effectively lead the society in delivering Lord Caitanya's Sankirtan Movement to the world. Solving the many institutional problems they face, from dealing with 'parallel lines of authority' to grappling with a constitution and a philosophical statement identifying His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and his place in the *guru-parampara* – these are weighty affairs, and how they are handled will have enormous and far-reaching consequences.

Today, some GBC members are themselves calling for discussions on the institutional Diksa Guru program, which a percentage of the leadership has long been dissatisfied with, much like the institutionalization of sannyasa. We suggest that the GBC would be well served to take this

first step – to abandon and renounce certain elements of their position on the May 28th Conversation and July 9th Letter which serve to bolster the Ritvik-vada position as established by *The Final Order*. Doing so would be a show of good faith that would give hope to thousands of devotees, both within and presently outside of the ISKCON institution.

At the center of every practical problem is a philosophical problem. In this case, the GBC have it within their power to make what is, from a practical standpoint, a relatively small adjustment that would help solve a significant philosophical problem.

As the author of TFO himself said:

"Anything, which can bring about some sort of resolution to this controversy has got to be positive for anyone who truly cares about Srila Prabhupada's Movement."

APPENDICES & REFERENCES

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Original version saved in 1997 (without logo) and analyzed in *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*
- [APX-2] *Performance of the 11 Rittik Representatives, July to November 1977*
[APX-2a] See also: Srila Prabhupada Disciple Database (Zip file)
- [APX-3] *Index of Errors in The Final Order*
- [APX-4] *Construction of the Final Order*
Comments on the inherent structural problems existing within TFO
- [APX-5] *Comparative Review of the May 28th Conversation Transcripts*
- [APX-6] Side-by-side comparison of 8 versions of May 28th Conversation transcripts
M28C Comparisons.xls
- [APX-7a] Audio of May 28th Conversation - M28C.mp4
[APX-7b] - M28C.wmv
[APX-7c] - M28C Audio Source - <http://www.archive.org/details/May28>
- [APX-8] Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) [To be completed]
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- [16 a] Srila Prabhupada's Will (Page 1)
[16 b] Srila Prabhupada's Will (Page 2)
[16 c] Srila Prabhupada's Will & Codicil (HareKrsna.com/Vada, c. 1996)
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ERRATA

Since the date of publication, the following changes have been made to all three versions of *Defeat of Ritvik-vada*:

AUG 03 2012: Addition of footnote for Reference [14] - full-length version p. 41; abridged version p. 50